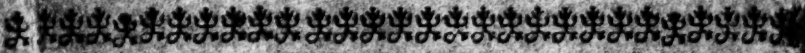
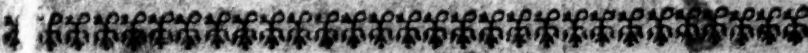


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THE SECOND  
ESSAY  
ON THE  
CATHOLICK-RELIGION, &c.







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THE SECOND  
E S S A Y  
ON THE  
CATHOLICK-RELIGION:

VIZ,

On its SUPPRESSION and the SUBSTITUTION OF HEATHENISM, OR IDOLATRY.

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By GUY VANE, of *Lincoln's-Inn*, Esq;

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b 2 forbearing

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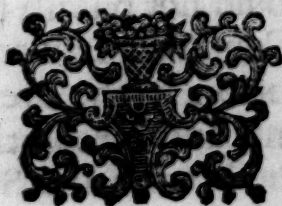
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THE



# THE INTRODUCTION.



*HAVING in the former of these Treatises essayed to shew what was the genuine Religion of the First Ages, before the Institution of Heathenism, or Idolatry. Having there set forth what seem to have been the genuine Branches of which the Catholick Religion consisted in its Primitive, Original, or First State, before it was corrupted by any spurious Mixtures. Now the Business of this Treatise is to shew what were those heathenish Devices and Impostures, by the Substitution of which, the primitive, or first Religion, was, by Degrees, supplanted, and at length universally suppressed; and by the Mixture and blending in of which, the true Religion when restored, hath been from Time to Time corrupted and sophisticated.*

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'TIS



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*T*IS certain, that, at the Time of Moses's Birth, Heathenism was so universally established, and the Worship of the Creator so universally suppressed, that even all Memory and Notion of the Creator was utterly extinguished; except only amongst the Posterity of Jacob, amongst whom only no Priest, or Idol, yet was found: And even amongst them, the Notion of the Deity was so corrupted and depraved, thro' the absurd Notions of the Heathen, amongst whom they had so long dwelt, that they could not even bear the genuine Notion and Character of the very God; not even Moses himself could prevail on them to quit their heathenish Notions of a Deity and broke the genuine Character of the truly august Creator of the World; they could not relish the Notion of an universal and impartial Deity and common Father of all Mankind; but would at any Rate reduce the Notion of the Jehovah to the narrow debased Notion of the local and national Deities, the supposed partial, tutelar Deities of the neighbouring Nations; they would not hear, or bear the Thought of any Deity, who would not confine himself to dwell amongst them, and become likewise their peculiar tutelar Deity; a Notion utterly inconsistent with the universal Benevolence and impartial Justice of the common Father of Mankind. A Notion which effectually prevented the Perfection of the mosaick Reformation, and constrained him to indulge them, by Reason of the Hardness of their Hearts, in most of the Absurdities of the heathen Superstition, for a Time.

AND

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*AND, as amongst other Nations, so likewise amongst the Hebrews, all visible Worship of the Creator was at that Time entirely suppressed by the furious Jealousy and inexorable Persecutions of the Magi, or heathen Priesthood of the Country where they dwelt, who with right pious Cruelty and blood-thirsty Zeal did incessantly animate both Prince and People to ruin and destroy whoever would not blindly submit to whatever the crafty Priesthood pretended to be the Will, the Interest, or Service of their pupil Deities: With their delusive Sorceries hardening the Hearts and intoxicating the Understandings of Mankind, by the Belief that their idol Gods wrought Miracles in Confirmation of what the crafty Priesthood gave out to be the sacred Will and Pleasure of those wonder-working Deities.*

*NOW to set forth in its true Light and naked Colours, that detestable, as well as ridiculous Hodge-Podge of holy Knaveries and sacred Absurdities, which was substituted and set up in the stead of true Religion; and which was supported and imposed on Mankind, not only by the Means of crafty and delusive Arts, but also by the Dread and Terrors of outrageous Violence and most execrable Cruelties, is the design of this E S S A Y.*

*AS to the Usefulness of the Design; what Affair can possibly be of more Importance to Mankind than that of Religion; and touching Religion, what can be of more Importance, than to be able, readily and surely to distinguish and discern what is counterfeit and spurious, from what is genuine and true? And what Means can be more opposite and effectual to*

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that Purpose, next to the Knowledge of what is genuine, than to learn and perfectly know what is counterfeit and spurious thro' all its Branches, Colours, or Disguises; least we should by any specious Colours, or Disguises, be imposed on to mistake what is but spurious and counterfeit for what is genuine and real. And as a just Knowledge of the Deformity and Perniciousness of Heathenism, is plainly necessary to the right Understanding the Sinfulness of it, and the true Reason why Idolatry is so abominable in the Sight of the all-gracious and all-wise Creator: So in order to attain a just Knowledge of that Deformity and Perniciousness, 'tis certainly necessary to examin fully, and perfectly see thro' all these Artifices and Delusions, by which the heathen Priesthood palliated, coloured and varnished over the gross Absurdities and abominable Villanies thereof; making the grossest Follies pass upon the oppressed, deluded and abused People for religious Duties, and the most detestable Villanies for divine and sacred Institutions. In Order likewise to the right Understanding the several Reformati<sup>o</sup>ns wrought by Moses and by the Messiah, to judge and distinguish perfectly the Defects and Imperfections of the one, and the compleat Perfection of the other, is plainly necessary a full and perfect Knowledge of all those spurious Mixtures and Devices by which Religion was so corrupted, encumb<sup>d</sup>red and choaked up, as to be rend<sup>r</sup>ed of no Effect as to the intended Purpose of its Institution; but also to be made subservient to the directly contrary Purposes of Fraud, Oppression, Villany and Vice. For who can firmly and assuredly



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redly determine whether all those Plants, which our heavenly Father hath not planted, are quite and clean rooted out, unless he first knew all those Spurious Plants thro' all their Species, thro' all their Parts and Branches, and thro' all their Colours, Guises and Appearances? Who can justly determine whether the genuine Constituents of the Catholick Religion are perfectly purified, purged and cleansed from all heterogeneous Mixtures and Corruptions; unless he fully knows both what is genuine and what is counterfeit, and can distinguish false Appearances from what is genuine and sincerely Good? And as the Reformation of Religion from those Corruptions and Abominations was the general Scope of the inspired Writers; so a due Knowledge of the Nature of those Corruptions and Abominations, from which Religion was thereby to be purged and purified, is manifestly necessary to the right Understanding of the sacred Text itself.

AGAIN, from the Contemplation of the heathen Superstition, having with due Horror and Detestation, as well as with due Scorn and Indignation, consider'd the pernicious Knaveries and most execrable Villanies, as well as the gross Absurdities of Heathenism, together with the general Calamities and Miseries thereby brought upon Mankind, we shall return of course with more Delight, both to the Contemplation and the Practice of those most reasonable, natural, plain and easy Duties, of which only Religion did consist in its Primitive, or First State of Purity and Simplicity; and whereby the most early Generations of Mankind were  
rendred

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*rend'red so Secure and Happy in their Converse and Dealings with one another, as to give Occasion to the Poets to dignify those happy Times with the Title of the Golden Age.*

*UPO N which Comparison ; as on one hand we find the Tendency of those genuine Duties of the Catholick Religion, to be altogether to the Common Welfare and Happiness of Mankind, which was the very Reason why they were enjoyned as Catholick Duties, by the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of our common Father : So on tother hand, we shall find the Spurious Duties and Impositions of heathen Superstition to be not only a meer cumbersome, unnecessary, useles Load and Burthen upon Mankind, no wise conducive to their Welfare and Happiness ; but also to be directly pernicious and destructive to the common Welfare of Mankind, as manifestly tending to impoverish, harrass and oppress the miserable People ; to enthral, enervate and subvert the civil Powers, and in every Respect to thwart and contradict the salutary Purposes of true Religion ; which was certainly the very Reason why Idolatry, or Heathenism, was so odious and abominable in the Sight of the all-gracious and all-wise Creator ; who could surely have no real Jealousy, or Fear any Thing to himself from such a doughty Rivalship. 'Tis certain, That whoever would be fully instructed how to avoid all Violation of God's Laws, must perfectly know and understand, not only those Sacred Duties which he is to observe and perform, but also those Evils which he is to shun and eschew ; so necessary is it to know the Evil of Superstition, as well as the Benefit of true Religion.*

I N

## THE INTRODUCTION. xxix

IN order therefore to shew Heathenism in the fullest Light, we shall endeavour first to trace the Purpose and Occasion of its Institution and Establishment; and then to trace out by what Means and Degrees the heathen Priesthood attain'd to such a Pitch of Wealth, of Popularity and real Power, as to be effectually enabled, not only to cast off their legal Subjection to the civil Powers, but also to assume and exercise a Sovereign Power and Absolute Dominion over both Prince and People; giving to both the Law with absolute Sovereignty, and making both the one and tother humbly to truckle and submit to all the arbitrary Dictates and Commands of Sacerdotal Will and Pleasure. And shall then proceed to shew that direct Antithesis and compleat Oppugnancy which the heathen Superstition bears towards true Religion in every respect; not only in Point of Religious Faith and Worship, but also in respect to the Moral Duties of Mankind towards one another.

AS to the Origin of the heathen Superstition, that Idolatry and Priesthood were both instituted and established, long before the Days of Moses, is manifest from divers Occurrences in the Books of Genesis and Exodus; besides what may be collected from uninspired Authors; and as they could have their Establishment from no other Authority than that of the civil Powers, 'tis more than probable that they received their Institution from the same Authority from which they certainly had their Establishment; Idolatry having been instituted meerly for the Sake of attributing to the Civil Powers a fictitious Sanction  
of



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*of Divinity ; and Priesthood having been instituted purpofely for the manage of Idolatry. For ;*


I. As Civil Government, or Magistracy, is altogether necessary, &c.



ESSAY II.



# ESSAY II.

I.  S Civil Government, or Magistracy, is altogether necessary to the common Welfare of Mankind in Society ; so Magistracy, or Civil Authority, if not duly limited, restrained and ballanced, is apt to degenerate into Tyranny and Arbitrary Sway. And as Monarchy was the most simple and artless Form of Civil Government, and most obvious to Thought, 'tis more than probable, that those petty States, or Societies, of which Mankind did antiently consist, selected each of them some Person of distinguished Reputation for Wisdom and Valour amongst them, to adjudge their Controversies, preside at their Councils, and lead them out against their Enemies ; all other the Magistrates and Officers of the respective Community being in Subordination to him, and he subject only to

the Agreements and Resolves of the General Council, or Assembly, of the respective State, or Society : And such Chief Magistrates were termed Kings and Emperors ; the Word *Rex*, meaning a Chief Ruler ; and the Word *Imperator*, a Chief-tain, or Military Commander.

II. Such seems to have been the most Primitive State of Civil Government, (Domestick, or Patriarchal Government, being of quite another Predicament,) and was long retained so amongst the antient *Goths*, *Scythians*, and other *Northern*, and less luxurious Nations : But through the boundless Ambition of despotick Sway, the cringing Flatteries of fawning Parasites, the obvious Means of forming and engaging a private Faction and Party, by the Sole Disposing of all Offices of Publick Trust and Profit ; the Opportunity of Bribing some with the Spoils and Oppression of others, and the like Temptations, the petty Monarchs prompted to affect, and often with Success to attempt, the Enslaving their unwary Subjects, and becoming lawless Tyrants over their oppressed Fellow-Citizens and Com-patriots : And that Point being fully effected ; as Ambition has no Bounds, the next Point is to try, if by their armed Bands (wherewith they awe and oppress their Fellow-Citizens) they can over-power, surprize, or by any Means subdue their weaker, or unguarded Neighbours ; and by the Occasion of such Conquests, enable themselves to over-match and conquer others ;  
forming



forming by such Degrees vastly extended Monarchies and Empires ; as History abundantly informs us.

III. But as Slavery is a Condition of Life the most odious and insupportable to human Nature, the oppressed People could not brook the lawless Impositions of their haughty Tyrants, and the injurious Insults of their insolent Parasites and Creatures, without the utmost Indignation and Resentment ; so to secure themselves against the Resentments of the Injured and Oppressed, it hath been ever the Custom of Tyrants to keep themselves inclosed in Castles, Cittadels, or fortified Palaces, attended only by their Domestick Servants, their Darling Favourites, and their Armed Bands ; rarely exposing themselves to publick View, receiving and answering the Addresses of their People by Proxy, and through the Mediation of their Favourites and Parasites. From which Occasion these crafty Parasites took a Handle to represent them, in their Speeches and Harangues to the People, as Persons of a Nature much above the common Level of Mankind ; devising and relating strange and fabulous Reports concerning the Births and Pedigrees of their then Reigning Monarchs ; and whose Births they affirm to have been attended by wond'rous Prodigies, Omens, and Portents ; and whose Ancestors they affirm to have performed Ten Thousand more than human-like heroick Exploits ;

whom therefore they piously recommend as Deities, or at least as *Divi*, or *Demi-gods*, to be the Objects of the Peoples Adoration and Worship; thereby impressing on the Minds of the People a superstitious as well as civil Awe of those sacred Persons, whom they are made to believe to have been descended from a Race Divine. For which Purpose, publick Festivals, or Sacrifices, with solemn Rites and Ceremonies, are instituted in Honour and perpetual Remembrance of those Divine Heroes; their sacred Statues are exposed to publick View, and all the Subjects are enjoined under the most rigorous Penalties (the Fiery Furnace, and the Lion's Den) to worship and adore the holy Idols; and certain Officers are appointed with honourable Stipends and Salaries to take Care of the sacred Images, to administer, direct, and superintend the Rites and Ceremonies to be performed in Honour of them; and to exact, enforce, and keep up the Worship, Reverence, Awe, and Devotion of the People towards them.

IV. These Officers thus munit with the Authority of the Civil Powers, seem to have taken upon themselves the Menage-Conduct, and Administration of the sacred Feasts, or Sacrifices, to be celebrated in Honour of their respective Idols; but laying the whole Expence upon the People, whom they oblige to bring in to them their Offerings, or Contributions of Cattle, Corn, Wine, and other Provisions, to be

be expended in those holy Banquets; terrifying them with the Severities which they inflict on whom-ever they think meet to charge with any Contempt, Neglect, or Remissness in their Devotion towards those new Deities and their holy Ministers; thereby aweing the People into a Uniform Submission and Obedience to whatever they think fit to impose upon them. From which Management, Conduct, and Administration of these holy Feasts, or Sacrifices, those Officers obtained the Name, or Title of *Sacrifici, Priests, or Sacrificers*; distinguishing themselves from the People by a peculiar solemn Dress, thereby to impress a greater Awe and Reverence in the Minds of the People towards their own Persons.

V. Such as abovesaid seems to have been the Source and Origin of heroick Idolatry, and of that lofty Compliment, the Stretch of Heathen Flattery, to wit, the being descended of a Race Divine. Thus *Jupiter*, King of *Crete*, and *Belus*, or *Baal*, King of *Affyria*, became Objects of religious Worship, and first-rate Deities in the Heathen Theologie. Thus *Nebuchadonezar*, King of *Nineveh*, made all the conquered Nations worship him as their God. And thus *Alexander*, the great *Macedonian* King, in order to be accounted of Race Divine, a sacred Person, and in Time became himself a Deity, renounced all Relation to his real Father, and declared himself to be the Son of *Jupiter*; in order belike to impress



a sacred Awe on the Minds of the conquered People, and keep them the more strictly attached to the Dominion of himself and his Posterity : Such seems to have been the Origin of Idolatry and Priesthood.

VI. 'Tis probable that the Magi, or Hea-then Priests, did for some time celebrate their Sacrifices under Trees and shady Groves, after the Manner of the Family Sacrifices of the Antients, and might have some sort of Repositories for their Idols in those sacred Groves ; till at length Temples, or Houses of Sacrifice, were erected for the Use of the Idols, and their respective Priests, furnished with Shrines, or Repositories, for the holy Idols, with Altars, and other Conveniencies, for the performing of their Sacrifices, with commodious Apartments for the Habitation of the Priests, and secret Contrivances for the performing their Oracles and mysterious Sorceries, wherewith they amazed and deluded the People ; which holy Officers, or Priests, were generally ranged in regular Subordination to each other, and each Rank distinguished by their respective Habits and Badges ; each such Temple, or College of Priests, having one President, or Governor, stiled the Hierarch, the Chief-Priest, or High-Priest, to whom all other the Priests, or Holy Officers, belonging to the same Temple, were subordinate according to their several Ranks, Orders, and Degrees ; which Æconomy, or Regulation,

Regulation, of those holy Officers, was, according to the *Greek Phrase*, stiled \* *Hierarchia*, the holy Regulation, or the Regulation of holy Persons: All Relatives of the holy Idols being esteemed Sacred and Holy.

VII. Idolatry thus regulated and established, thus diligently cultivated by the furious Zeal of the self-ended Priesthood, and vigorously enforced by the Civil Powers, took firm Root, and at length not only rivalled, but also totally supplanted the Worship, and effaced the very Notion and Remembrance of the Great Creator: What was at first imposed by Cruelty and Persecution, growing in Time familiar and habitual, and at length becoming in the utmost Esteem with the bigotted Multitude, at once both dazzled and delighted with the gaudy Pomp and Pageantry, and awed with the solemn Gravity of the Sacardotal Force; and who were dreadfully astonished at their magick Performances, their prophetick Auguries, divine Inspirations, Oracles, and miraculous Predictions; and above all, terrifyed and afrighted out of all religious Doubts, Scruples, and Objections, by the dreadful Examples they daily saw made of such unhappy Persons as the holy Priests thought

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\* The Word *Hierarchy*, meaning Priestly Government, or Dominion, is not of *Hebrew*, but of *Greek* Origin, and might perhaps be a Phrase in Use amongst the Heathen Priests, but is no where to be trac'd in the holy Scriptures.

thought meet to brand with the fatal Titles of impious, prophane and blasphemous Wretches, Contemnners of the Gods, and of their holy Rites and Ceremonies; being dreadfully warn'd by such Examples, to shun the Ruin and Destruction they saw daily fall on all who durst incur the holy Vengeance and Displeasure of a jealous and enraged Priesthood.

VIII. The crafty Priesthood finding themselves at length in such Reverence and Esteem with the deluded Multitude, that no one durst question, or contradict, whatever Doctrines, or Pretensions, they thought fit to set up; they were soon tempted to cast off all Subjection and Dependance on the Civil Powers, to whom they really owed both their Institution and Establishment, and to set up for themselves; and therefore in order both to heighten the superstitious Veneration of the People towards themselves, and likewise to lay a Foundation, whereon to ground their intended Claim of Independency; they pretend their Function to be of divine Institution: Each Set of Priests insinuating, that their respective Deity had chosen them from amongst the People, and called them to be his peculiar Servants and Ministers, to attend upon him, to serve him, and administer to him, to take Care of his Interests, and to be Mediators between him and the rest of Mankind.

IX. In



IX. In order therefore to make room for these Pretences of Divine Institution and Personal Election, they frame the Characters of their Deities, so as best may suit the Purpose; each Clan of Priests representing their respective Deity, as a proud, morose, testy, capitious and exceeding wrathful Being; very difficult to please, and most terrible in his Anger; a Being much delighted with Pomp, Pageantry, and Artful Flatteries; exceedingly Dainty and Squeamish in point of Mode and Fashion; that stands much upon the Nicety of Ceremony and Punctilio; very nice and difficult of Address, who Scorns, Detests and Abhors the rude, coarse, uncourtly Addresses of the Vulger; and mostly gained by a Peculiar, and very Critical Manner of Address. That therefore he had Instituted and Ordained certain Sacred Forms, Rites and Ceremonies to be most strictly and religiously Observed, in all Acts and Functions, relating to his Honour and Service, any the least Deviation therefrom rendring such Acts and Functions, not only unacceptable, but even meer Abominations in his Sight. That therefore he had called and selected them to be his Peculiar Officers and Servants, to attend upon him to Administer to his Occasions, to learn his Methods, to observe his Ordinances, and to perform those Honours and Services, that he required, in such Manner as was most Pleasing to him; that he had therefore appointed

them to be Mediators, and Intercessors to go between him and his Votaries, to receive and communicate, or offer up to him the Addresses of the People, and to impart to them his holy Will and Ordinances, to be on one Hand Advocates with him for his Votaries, and on tother Hand, to be to them his Agents and Embassadors, to take Care of his Interests, to treat and conclude with his Votaries; graciously promising in all Events, to ratifie and confirm whatever Bargains they should make on his Behalf; that therefore them his chosen Servants, he had Hallowed and Sanctified to himself, had made their Persons sacred and inviolable, and made them subject, and accountable to himself alone.

X. THESE Doctrines (such as they are) seem to have been the Original Principles, on which were Founded all Sacerdotal Claims of Powers and Dominion separate from, and Independent on the Estate, which when suffered to be firmly rooted in the Minds of the Superstitious Multitude, 'tis no Wonder that Priesthood in process of Time, arrived to such a Pitch of Power, as not easily to be controuled by the Civil Magistrate, but on the contrary to become formidable to, and even to be able to over-awe and controul those very Powers to which Priesthood and Hierarchy owed their Origin and Existence.

XI. UPON this testy Mororeness and capricious Partiality, of their fictitious Deities, depend

depend plainly the Sacerdotal Pretences to Divine Institution and Election; and on their Divine Institution and Election were founded their Ambitious Pretensions to Independent Power and Dominion.

XII. By Means of these Pretences, when fixed as Sacred and Uncontested Principles, the Crafty Priesthood, from being Mediators and Intercessors, from being Propitiators, or Solicitors of Divine Favours, and Atoners, or Appeasors of Divine Wrath, they soon arrive to the Pitch of Arbitrary Dispensers and Controulers, both of the Favours and the Vengeance of their respective Deities; so managing the pretended Will and Ordinances of their Deities, as to be absolutely subservient to their own self-interested Views and Purposes; each Gang of Priests boldly insuring the Favour and good Graces of their Deity to such Votaries, as Blindly, and without Reserve, submit to all their self-ended Dictates and Commands; and no less confidently denouncing his Divine Wrath and Vengeance against whoever dares in the least Gainsay, or Contradict them; whereby they find their Power and Dominion to reach so far as ever they could extend the Terror and Imaginary Power of their Pupil Deity. For which Reason it hath ever been the constant Maxim of each Clan of Priests, to impress upon the Minds of the Superstitious Multitude, the most dreadful Notions and Ideas of their Hobgoblin Deities;



terrifying their Minds with frightful Tales and Stories of the direful Vengeance of the Gods in Ages past, upon such impious Wretches as durst in the least Contemn, or Disrespect them and their Holy Priests.

XIII. 'Tis the Fundamental Artifice of Priestcraft to represent the Characters and Humours of their Fictitious Deities, so as best may Answer the selfish Ends and Purposes, the Pride, Avarice, Ambition and Revenge of the Crafty Priesthood. Having therefore so framed the Characters of their Gods as to answer the Ends of their Pride and Ambition, and lay a Foundation for their darling Pretensions to Independency and Dominion; the next Point was to frame some colourable Pretensions to some Funds and Revenues, to support the Purposes of Sacerdotal Luxury and Pride, that might be independent of the State; Funds and Revenues distinct and separte from the Provisions and Appointments settled by, and consequently Dependent on the Civil Magistrate; for which Purpose they model the Characters and Humours of their Deities, so as to answer that End also; representing their Gods to be so wretchedly Indigent and Needy, as to lack, crave, and raven after the Substance and Possessions of Poor Mortals; and therefore mostly delighted with Presents, Gifts, and Offerings; so covetous, mercenary, and greedy after the Wealth and Substance of Poor Mortals, as to Traffique their Favours, their  
Vengeance

Vengeance, and their Justice, with their Votaries for Presents, Gifts, and Offerings. No means to propitiate, or gain the Favour of the Gods, so effectual as liberal Gifts and Offerings; no way to atone, appease, or pacify the Wrath, and to avert the Vengeance of the Angry Deity, so effectual as Copious Gifts and Offerings; no way for the Profligate and Flagitious to escape the Justice of the Avenging Deities, so effectual as lusty Bribes, as wealthy Presents, Gifts and Offerings: But no Favour, no Mercy, no Justice for the empty handed Suppliant. These Mercenary Propitiations, Expiations, and Commutations, in Lieu of Justice; These corrupt Beneficences to mercenary Deities, instead of Compensation to injured and oppressed Innocence; this holy Device of Sharing the Booty, the Spoils of injured Innocence, the Fruits of Repine, Fraud, and Villany, 'twixt the Wrong-Doers and the Gods, instead of Restitution to the Injured: As 'twas on one Hand a vast Encouragement to Repine, Fraud, and all Sorts of Villany; so on tother Hand, 'twas an Inexhausted Source of Opulence and Wealth, to those Crafty Receivers and Treasurers of the Gods, the holy Priesthood. This Notion (absur'd as it is) of needy, self-ended, corrupt, mercenary Deities; Deities capable of being influenced by Bribes, by Gifts and Offerings; this Fundamental Principle, this Main Spring of Priestcraft, absur'd as it is, yet was the very Engine

Engine, by the Means of which Sacerdotal Avarice hath ever drained the Wealth of whole Kingdoms and Nations, into their own Coffers. No remarkable Event can happen but what brings Grist to their Mill: Whatever Calamity, Publick, or Private, doth befall, 'tis straitways imputed to the Vengeance of the offended Deities, whose Wrath must forthwith be atoned with Costly Sacrifices, Gifts, and Offerings: Whatever fortunate Event betides, is charged to the Favour and Benignity of the Gods, obtained thro' the Propitiatory Mediations and Intercessions of the good and gracious Priesthood, and the meritorious Gifts and Offerings of their Pious Votaries; the gracious Numens must therefore be rewarded with fresh Gifts and Offerings, and kept in Humour to grant further Blessings: Whatever Affair is to be taken in Hand, the Favour of the Gods must first be purchased in order to Success: Whatever Danger hath been escaped, whatever Risque, or Hazard is to be gone thro', each furnishes Occasion for Remuneratory, or Propitiatory Gifts and Offerings: No Crime, no Villany, no Wickedness can be committed, but what brings Wealth into the Sacerdotal Stores; no Crime, no Villany, no Wickedness, but what must be atoned for; no Crime, no Villany, no Wickedness, but what may be expiated and redeemed by wealthy Sacrifices, Gifts, and Offerings; the holy Priesthood confidently,

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warranting to the Bounteous Votary both the Mercies and the Favour of his well-toned and propitiated Deity, who has graciously promised at all Adventures, to ratify and confirm whatever Bargains they his holy Agents and Embassadors, should make in his Name.

XIV. NOR is it to be wondered, that the heathen Priesthood ascribed to their supposed Deities, not only humanlike Infirmities and Wants, but also humanlike Vices, and that in the utmost Excess; when we consider that on these Infirmities and Vices were grounded, both their independent Powers and Revenues, and even the very Essence of Priesthood itself. Had they supposed their Deities to have been perfect self-subsistent Beings, what need could they have had of the wretched Bounties of poor needy Mortals; could the immortal Gods have perished, been pinched, or suffered Pain thro' lack of Rayment, Food, or Habitation? How monstrously absur'd the Notion, and yet how plainly Necessary to Priestcraft? Had their Deities been represented as perfect self-subsistent Beings, what Occasion then could they have had for any human Services, for any human Attendance, or Assistance, or for any peculiar Officers, or Priests, to attend and serve them? And as humanlike Infirmities and Wants in their immortal Beings was a Supposition, absolutely necessary to the very Essence and Being of Priesthood; so on the  
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supposed Vices of their Gods were grounded  
 all their Sacerdotal Pretentions to Independent  
 Powers and Revenues. Had they supposed  
 their immortal Beings to have excelled  
 in moral Virtues ; to have been perfectly  
 Just, Impartial and Upright in all the Dispensations  
 of their Justice and their Favours ; to  
 have been equally and indifferently accessible  
 to the Supplications and Addresses of the Rich,  
 the Poor, the Powerful, the Weak, the  
 Wise, the Simple, even to all Mankind alike,  
 without any partial Prejudices of Favour, or  
 Dislike ; what Occasion, or Room, could there  
 then have been for Sacerdotal Mediators, or  
 Intercessors, for any Mercenary Propitiators,  
 or Atoners, for any holy Traffiquers, or Bro-  
 kers of Divine Justice and Favour ? Then plain-  
 ly might all Mankind alike, have addressed  
 their humble Prayers and Supplications, di-  
 rectly to the Immortal Powers ; without any  
 previous Application to frail Mortals, as ne-  
 cessary Procurators of Divine Favour and  
 Justice : The supposed Vices therefore of their  
 Gods were the Fundamental Principles, the  
 necessary Basis, and Foundation of heathen  
 Hiererchy and Priesthood ; 'tis to the sup-  
 posed Caprice, and Partiality of the Im-  
 mortal Beings, that the Priesthood plainly  
 owed both their Divine Election and Institu-  
 tion, and all those partial Prerogatives that  
 they pretend to over the rest of Mankind, and  
 to the supposed Avarice and Corruption of the  
 Gods,

Gods, it is that they plainly owe all those Pretensions, by which they make all the rest of Mankind Tributary to themselves. So extremely Serviceable and Commodious was the supposed Avarice of the Gods, to the real Avarice of the Rapacious Priesthood; who make themselves not only Assessors, Collectors, and Receivers for their Gods; but also Treasurers and Stewards, with full Power to dispose and apply those sacred Stores and Treasures of the Gods, to what Uses, Intents, and Purposes soever the Crafty Priests themselves think fit. Such plainly were the Devices by which the heathen Priesthood gulled the People of their Wealth, and the Magistrate of his Authority; subjecting, by Degrees, both the one and the other, to the Haughty Tyranny, and Arbitrary Sway of Hierarchy, or Sacerdotal Dominion.

XV. As Wealth and Power were the two Cardinal Points, towards which the heathen Priesthood directed all the Menage of Idolatry; so both these Ends were greatly advanced and served by the holy Traffique of Divine Propitiations, of Divine Atonements, and Mercenary Expiations and Redemptions of Crimes, and Offences for wealthy Gifts and Offerings; the Crafty Priesthood thereby not only Amassing together infinite Treasures to themselves, even to the utter Impoverishment of the People, and Weakning and Disabling the State; but also thereby effectually gaining

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over



over, and attaching strongly to their own Interests, (to the pernicious Interests of Hierarchy and Priestcraft) the blind Devotions of the superstitious Multitude; who look upon the Priesthood as their necessary Savers and Redeemers; from the dreadful Wrath and Vengeance of those terrible, fierce, and otherwise inexorable Deities; those dreadful, fierce, untractable Deities, no-wise to be propitiated, or atoned, but thro' the favourable Intercessions of those holy Favourites, and bosom-Advocates the Priests; all direct Addresses by the People, being not only unavailable, but even meer Abominations to their squeamish Godships.

XVI. As the pannick Fears of the Timorous and Superstitious on the one hand; and the reasonable Remorse of the Flagitious on the other hand, conscious of Crimes committed, and dreading (tho' they know not whence) the Justice due to their Iniquities; do both equally advance the Ends of Sacerdotal Avarice and Ambition; both the flagitious Villain, and the trembling Bigot; placing all their Hopes of Salvation, all their Hopes of Safety and Deliverance from those Evils, which they dread, from the Wrath and Fury of their angry Gods, in the favourable Solicitations and Intercessions of the All-prevailing, and All-powerful Priesthood; whom they esteem their Savers, Redeemers, and Deliverers from Misery, from Ruin and Destruction.

Destruction. To highten therefore the pannick Terrors of the Superstitious, tho' unoffending Bigot, the crafty Priesthood represent their deified Hobgoblins to be of so savagely cruel, and bloodthirsty a Disposition, as to delight in the Misery and Afflictions of Mankind, and to delight even in the Blood of the Innocent, as well as of the Guilty, unless frequently atoned with liberal Gifts and Offerings; Hobgoblins so Morose, so Fierce and Terrible, as to be utterly untractable to any but their Keepers (the holy Priests,) and never in good Humour, but when full glutted with wealthy Sacrifices, Gifts, and Offerings.

XVII. The Superstitious and Unthinking Multitude thus terrifyed and deluded by the crafty Artifices of the Designing and Selfended Priesthood, imagine their Ruin and their Safety intirely to depend on the Favour of those pretended Mediators and all prevailing Advocates and Intercessors with the immortal Beings; and therefore fear, reverence, and adore them, as absolute Arbiters and Controulers of human Fates. The pannick Dread of their Hobgoblin Deities binding the Devotion and Obedience of the Superstitious Multitude to their supposed Savers and Redeemers, more strongly than the Influence of Laws can to the Civil Magistrate; the crafty Priesthood by Degrees engrossing to themselves both the Substance and Obedience of the People; thereby manifestly sapping the

very Foundations of the Civil Powers, and in their Stead raising up on high the Rival Power of Enthusiastick Hierarchy, or Sacerdotal Dominion.

XVIII. This holy Traffique of mercenary Expiations, Atonements, and Propitiations, was so extreamly Commodious and effectually Serviceable to the Ends both of Sacerdotal Avarice and Ambition, that the Heathen Religion seemed to consist of nothing else but Gifts, or Presents, furnished by the pious Layety, supposed to be administred, or applyed, to the Wants, Necessities, and Occasions of the Gods by the holy Priesthood; insomuch, that from those *Sacra Dotes*, those devoted Presents, or Contributions of the People, supposed to be offered up to the Gods themselves, by their trusty Stewards the Priests, those holy Officers of the Gods, acquired the Name and Title of *Sacerdotes*, or Offerers of sacred Gifts, or Oblations. In short, whatever was Delightful, whatever was Useful, whatever was Necessary to Mankind, was so likewise to the Gods, and must be plentifully supplied by the liberal Contributions of the Layety; or else they must expect to hear the enraged Priesthood thunder out most dreadful Judgements and Execrations against the Wickedness and Impiety of the Age; denouncing the Wrath and Vengeance of the Gods against Mankind for their impious Contempt and Neglect of their Honour and Service.



XIX. And as numerous Flocks, Herds, and Bands of Cattle, and of Slaves, were esteemed the most valuable Possessions of Mankind; the crafty Priesthood, for the Purpose, represent their Gods to be mostly delighted, and most effectually atoned and propitiated with Banquets, Feasts, or Sacrifices, of the Flesh and Blood of Bulls, of Sheep, of Goats, and other domestick Animals; but above all, with the dread Sacrifice of human Flesh and Blood; the Preparing, Butchering, and Cooking of which were esteemed amongst the most sacred Acts the *Sacrificia*, or sacred Facts of their holy Function, and reserved peculiarly to themselves, and themselves thence styled *Sacrifici*; thereby obliging the deluded Multitude to devote to them, not only the Fairest and the Choicest of their Cattle, and their Slaves, but even of their Sons and Daughters, for the pretended Use and Service of their Savage and Blood-thirsty Gods; the crafty Priesthood thereby both enriching themselves, and likewise striking the most profound Dread, Awe and Terror upon the Minds of the Bigotted and Enthralled Multitude.

XX. By such Artifices do the rapacious Priesthood draw and squeeze the Wealth and Substance of the deluded Layety into their own Coffers. But as these Sacrifices, Gifts, and Offerings, these pious Contributions of the poor gulled Layety, supposed to be administered

nistred and applyed by the Priesthood to the Wants, Necessities and Occasions of their hungry Deities, could not be really serviceable to the Gods themselves ; as the Gods could not be in any wise really benefitted thereby ; least therefore that the bubbled Layety, if suffered to reason, scrutinize, and pry too nearly into the Menage and Conduct of the holy Imposture, might see through the Cheat, and keep their Wealth and Substance to themselves ; twas necessary that the holy Priesthood should devise some Expedient to keep their Cullies at a convenient Distance, and to deter them from being too inquisitive into the Secrets of the holy Trade. For which Reason, it hath ever been a settled Maxim of Priestcraft, at any Rate, either by imaginary, or by real Evils, to restrain and deter the Layety from all Freedom of Speech, and Communication of Thought, touching the Nature and Essences of their Gods, and of the Menage of their holy Officers. For which End, each Gang of Priests with grave and solemn Countenances pretend it to be the expresse Will and Ordinance of their respective Deity, that the Manner of Communication 'twixt him and his holy Officers, the Manner of their directing and offering to him their Services and Addresses, and the Manner of receiving from him the Dictates of his holy Will and Ordinances, should be a profound Secret, or sacred Mystery, not to be divulged to the unhal-

hallowed Layety, to the profane un sancti-  
fied Layety; for that, forsooth, would be a  
hainous Offence and Abomination to his  
dainty Godship. Therefore they solemnly  
declare those Acts and Functions of their holy  
Office to be sacred Mysteries, or holy Se-  
crets, not to be pryed into, or enquired after  
by the Layety, on Pain of incurring the ut-  
most Vengeance and Displeasure of the of-  
fended Deity.

XXI. And forasmuch as to support the  
Notion, that their publick Rites and Cere-  
monies were of divine Ordinance and Insti-  
tution, and therefore sacred and invariable;  
them the crafty Priesthood perform in the  
Sight of the People, with all scrupulous Exact-  
ness and awful Solemnity; with seeming  
Fear and well dissembled Terror in all their  
Gesture, Mien and Countenance, as tho'  
they dreaded to offend, as tho' even they  
themselves dreaded to offend their furious  
Deity by any the least tittle of Mistake, or  
Neglect, by any the least Variance in any  
the most minute Punctilio of Form; so they  
give out and pretend that the Solemnity of  
those sacred Mysteries, those holy Rites and  
Ceremonies, which are concealed from the  
People, was infinitely more dreadful and tre-  
mendous. Ceremonies so tremendously So-  
lemn, and so dangerously Nice, that it was a  
Happiness to the People to be restrained from  
intermedling with Secrets so very Nice and  
Dan-



Dangerous ; and from any near Approach to such a fierce and terrible Deity. Then seasonably remonstrating how Good and Gracious their God had been in appointing them, even them his holy Priests, to be Mediators and Intercessors between the People and Himself, to be Advocates for the People to him ; to offer up to him the humble Addresses ; the Supplications and pious Gifts and Offerings of the People, to atone his Wrath, avert his Vengeance, and to propitiate and render him gracious and favourable to their Vows, their Wishes and Desires. Then piously exhorting them (the gaping and amazed Multitude) to testify their Gratitude and Devotion to so Good and Gracious a God, by liberal and frequent Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings.

XXII. Thus do the crafty Priesthood smooth and varnish over the greatest Absurdities that ever were imposed on Mankind ; thus do they blind the Understandings of the Weak and Simple, fright'ning them out of their Senses thro' the Dread of the imaginary Wrath and Vengeance of their Hobgoblin Deities on one hand, and soothing them on tother hand with the no less imaginary Blessings of his Favour and good Graces. But if any Person of deeper Penetration and Sagacity, dare to reason freely on the manifest Absurdities of those plainly partial and self-ended Pretentions, dare to undeceive his Neighbours, the watchful Priesthood, fearful of Truth,

Truth, and ever jealous of free and unprejudiced Reasoning; first blast his Character with all Sorts of Calumnies, no Matter whether true or false, to deterr all others from conversing with him; then work his sure Destruction to gratify their fell Revenge. No sooner do they nose him out, but strait the Word is given, it runs from one Gang of Priests to another, like Wildfire thro' the Country, all quick as Lightning, take the Alarm; all issue out upon him with united Fury as upon their Common Enemy; the Cry arises, all Throats are open every where against him; all Heads and Hands at Work to baulk his Interests, to blacken his Character, and blast his Name, and render him the Mark and Object of popular Hate and Fury. He is on every Hand proclaimed an Infidel; a Miscreant, an impious Wretch, a horrible Blasphemer of the Gods, and of the holy Priesthood; an Enemy, and Contemner of the immortal Beings, and of their holy Officers the Priests; a devoted Object of the Wrath and Vengeance of the offended Deities. Every one is solemnly warned and exhorted to forbear all social Conversation, all friendly Dealing, or Commerce, with the devoted Wretch, lest they should incur the Wrath of Heaven, and be involved in his certain Ruin. The whole Nation is threat'ned with Calamities, and with the Vengeance of the injured Gods, if such a Wretch should go un-

punished; the stupid Zeal and pannick Fears of the bigotted Multitude is wrought up into Rage, Fury and Madness against him; the Civil Magistrate is admonished, exhorted, and even menaced to do Justice to Heaven and the injured Gods; he is accused of Ten Thousand various Crimes; Villanies of all Sorts and Kinds are charged against him; he must suffer for the People, 'tis better that one should fall, than a whole Nation perish; 'tis the Cause of Heaven, the Cause of the holy Priesthood, the Cause of the People; Duty, Interest, and Necessity all cry out for the Destruction of the devoted Victim, and happy is he who can find a Stone to throw against the Enemy of the Gods; they are exhorted, they are commanded, they are menaced so to do; and who dare be the Advocate of such a Wretch? Who dare doubt the Truth of any Charge to which the holy Priesthood have unanimously given their sacred Sanction, who dares be Advocate even for Innocence itself against such Accusers, or patronize in any degree the declared Enemy of Heaven and the holy Priesthood? In short, he is unherded, blown, run down and destroyed. His Interests thus ruined, his Reputation black'ned, on every side abandoned, forsaken and forlorn, he falls a hapless Sacrifice to his holy Enemies; a devoted Victim to Sacerdotal Malice and Revenge. Thus did they keep the Multitude in



in uniform Submission to all their knavish Impositions, making the stupid Populace the Instruments of Destroying who ever durst attempt to open their Eyes, to undeceive them, and deliver them from the Darkness and Folly of Idolatry, and the knavish Impositions of the crafty and self-ended Priesthood.

XXIII. As nothing can more effectually conduce to dissipate those Prejudices and Errors, which obscure the Understandings of Mankind, than impartial Reasoning, and a perfect unconfin'd, unfetter'd Freedom of examining into the Nature of Things, and the Reality of Facts; as such generous unprejudic'd Freedom of Reasoning and Examination into the Depth of Things, is the surest and the only sure Method of attaining Truth; and as the Appearance of Truth is ever formidable to Fraud and Imposition: Therefore the Managers of Imposture have ever used their utmost Craft and most strenuous Endeavours by Calumnies, by Persecutions, by Poysonings, by Assassinations even of crown'd Heads themselves, by Fire, Fagot, and the most furious and bloodthirsty Zeal, to deter and suppress that Probity and generous Freedom of Thought and Conversation, that they had Reason to apprehend might open the Eyes of the deluded Multitude, detect their Knaveries, and undeceive their cullied Votaries. The suppressing effectually all freedom of impartial Reasoning and unprejudiced

Judgment, and putting a Stop to all Gainfaying, Questioning, or even Doubling the Sincerity of their Proceedings, is the very Quintessence of sacerdotal Art and Skill; whenever that Point is effectually attain'd, what Knavery so pernicious, what Absurdity so gross, which they may not impose at pleasure on Mankind. For which reason, notwithstanding the numerous Variety of their Gods, their various Independent Clans of Priests, yet do we scarce ever find them endeavour to detect and expose each others Frauds and Impositions, but ever find it for their Common Interest to keep up, and by all Means advance the Superstition and Bigottry of the cullied Multitude, their common Prey and Quarry; and therefore, notwithstanding any private Grudges, or Interferings amongst themselves, yet do they all unanimously combine to decry, run down, oppress, and ruin whomever they can any wise discover to have Sagacity enough to see through their crafty and self-ended Knaveries and Delusions, to unvail their sacred Mysteries, or holy Secrets; and Probity enough to undeceive his Neighbours.

XXIV. To effect this blessed Purpose of deceiving some, and sealing up the Lips of all that might discern the Cheat, and undeceive the bubbled Multitude; the furious Zeal of sacerdotal Jealousy, not only stirrs up (according to the Saying) Heaven and Earth against whom-

whomever they mark out for Destruction, under the Names and Titles of Infidels, Miscreants, Unbelievers, Misbelievers, Dissenters, Nonconformists, and the like, amounting really to nothing more than Gainsayers and Undeceivers ; but also in order to represent them as wicked, impious, and pernicious Persons, and as such recommend them to the Hatred and furious Zeal of the unwary, undiscerning Multitude ; the crafty Priest for this very Purpose, confounds both the Names and Notions of Vice and Virtue ; applauding, crying up, and glorifying, by the specious empty Titles of True Believers, Pious, Faithful, Devout, and Zealously Religious, the stupidly Credulous, and the headlong Giddy Bigot, the Tool of sacerdotal Malice and Revenge, as well as Prey of sacerdotal Avarice ; and condemn as impious and detestable that Sagacity of Thought, and Integrity of Conversation that will not easily swallow down, or silently connive at Fraud, Deceit and Imposition.

XXV. IN all Affairs of Importance, except Religion only, a reasonable Circumspection, a Wariness of being deceived, on one hand ; and an ingenuous Probity and Frankness of Conversation, without suppressing, or any wise disguising Truth, or countenancing, or conniving at Fraud, Imposture and Deceit, have ever been allowed to be virtuous and commendable ; in all Affairs, except Religi-  
on



on only, a lazy, supine, rash, precipitate Credulity, and Easiness to be deceived, and imposed on, hath on one hand ever been universally condemned, as not only imprudent, but even ridiculously Absurd, and to the last Degree dangerous in all Matters of Importance; and, on tother hand, all dissingenuity and insincerity of Conversation tending to suppress, or disguise the Truth, or countenance, or connive at Fraud, Deceit, and Imposition, have been universally allowed to be blameable, and unworthy of an Honest, Virtuous, or truly Religious Person. But in the Affair of Religion only, in the Affair of the utmost Importance to Mankind, in that only, all Freedom of Thought, and Liberty of Examining to the Bottom of Things, all waryness of being deceived, or imposed on, all freedom of Scrutiny and Examination into what is Truth, and what is Error, or Imposture; all Means of discerning Truth from Falshood and Deceit, are rigidly denyed, condemned, and severely interdicted by the Crafty, Self-ended, and furiously Jealous Priesthood. Every Thing must be taken upon Trust, upon Content, without the least Examination; upon the Trust and Credit of the Priest; upon the Word of the Priesthood only, without farther Proof, or farther Doubt, as tho' where was the greatest Stake, there the most Supine Negligence of Thought, and careless Credulity, and unwariness of being  
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tricked, were not only less blameable than in Affairs of less Importance, but were even a Duty of the highest Importance to the Welfare of the Gods. In the Affair of Religion only, all Probity and ingenuous Freedom of Reasonings and Conversing is condemned, and strictly interdicted as offensive to the Gods; and a silent Connivence at, and ready Conformity and Submission to whatever Forgeries and Impositions the Avarice, or Ambition of the crafty Priesthood may think fit to put upon Mankind, are enjoyned and exacted, as Duties necessary to the Welfare of the Gods, and indispensably incumbent on the People; blind Credulity and implicit Faith in the sacred Word of the holy Priesthood, and absolute Submission and Conformity to all their self-ended Interdictions and Commands, being the only Terms of Safety and Salvation from the wrathful Vengeance of their angry Gods, that the crafty Priesthood can afford, or allow the People.

XXVI. THUS do they blind the Understandings of the Multitude, and keep the Weak and Credulous in Awe with pannick Frights, and the Dread of meer fictitious and imaginary Evils; but to enslave, and overawe the Wise and Brave, real Evils, and implacable bloodthirsty Persecution must take Place. Whoever dares unvail their sacred Mysteries, detect their Frauds, and undeceive the People, or any wise thwart, or oppose

pose their Avarice, Ambition, or Revenge; no sooner do they nose him out, but that they stir up Heaven and Earth to work his Ruin and Destruction. They load him with all sorts of Calumnies, and not only stimulate, and inflame the blind bigotted Zeal of the superstitious Multitude against him, but also by all Manner of Artifices, by Exhortations, Cajolements, Threats, Flatteries, and whatever Means, Craft, and Malice can suggest, they incite and animate the Civil Powers against him, and make the Magistrate the Instrument and Tool, both of their Ambition and Revenge. Their Tool and Instrument to crush the Wise and Brave, as well as the Weak and Simple, into that uniform Subjection to the rival Power of Hierarchy and Priesthood; which when those holy Officers attain the Power of doing by their own Authority, without the Aid of the Civil Magistrate, or what is the same in effect, when the Civil Magistrate dares not refuse to be the Tool and Instrument of Sacerdotal Malice and Revenge; then is Hierarchy at its Crisis; then hath it arrived at the desired Pitch of Perfection. The Road to which is plain and obvious; for when the subtle Priesthood have by the Aid of the Civil Powers seduced the People to an uniform, silent, patient, and even devoted Submission and Attachment to the Interests of Hierarchy and Priesthood; the crafty Priesthood will (turn about,) make use of the  
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popular Superstition and Bigottry to subject the Civil Magistrate, even Kings and Emperors, to the sacerdotal Yoke. Then rampant Hierarchy reigns universally triumphant over the scorned and enthralled Layety; uniformly triumphant as well over Kings and Princes, as over Peasants and Mechanicks, which is the manifest Reason why a bigotted persecuting Prince, who thereby saps the Foundation of his own Power and Authority is ever a Darling with the rampant and revengeful Priesthood. Persecution being indispensably necessary to the Menage of Priestcraft and Idolatry.

XXVII. VARIOUS and manifold were the Devices and Forgeries, by which the crafty Priesthood, partly terrifyed, and partly wheadled the People out of their Wealth, the Magistrate out of his Authority, and both out of their Liberties and Freedom, reducing both at length to absolute Bondage and Subjection to Hierarchy, or sacerdotal Tyranny. For the Purpose, to render Idolatry, which was so profitable to the Priesthood, likewise palatable to the Layety, they set up the Notion of national, and local Deities; of Gods that were partially favourable and gracious to this, or that Country, or Nation, more than to any other; whom therefore they stiled their tutular Deities, the Champions and Protectors of this, or that Country, or Nation, to fight for them against their Enemies, to de-

send them against Disasters, and to direct and assist them in their Councils and their Enterprises: Wherefore nothing of Weight, or Moment, was to be done, or undertaken, without first consulting the holy Oracles, or taking the Advice of the Gods; which must, by no Means, be done with empty Hands, but must be decently introduced with liberal Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings. By this Device the crafty Priesthood, besides the Increase of sacerdotal Wealth, made brave Use of the popular Bigottry and Superstition, to bridle and controul the civil Magistrate, who durst not, on pain of offending the Gods, and bringing down Calamities on the People, do, or undertake, any thing of Weight, or Moment, or even take upon himself the ordinary Exercise and Function of his legal Authority, without the auspices Inauguration and Benedictions of the holy Priesthood; or in plain Words, without first applying to, and obtaining the gracious Consent, License, and good Leave, forsooth, of the Priesthood, for his so doing; the crafty Priest having thereby plainly gained a flat Negative upon the civil Magistrate in whatever he would take in hand. Such is the Force of popular Bigottry and Superstition, when suffered to get a Head.

XXVIII. THIS Notion of divine Partiality, celestial Favour, and tutular Deities, was extremely well adapted and agreeable to the  
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Temper of the timorous and superstitious Multitude, and took wonderfully with the People; no Nation, Country, Town, or City, would be so careless and neglectful of their own Wellfare and Safety, as not to seek some cœlestial Patron and Protector; each must have their peculiar Numens, their tutular Gods, to whom to make their Court, and to whom to make their Refuge in all Calamities and Dangers. So that thro' the stupid Credulity of the People, the indefatigable Industry of the holy Priesthood, and their laudable Zeal against Free-thinkers and Gain-sayers, Idolatry soon spread itself over the whole Earth; and almost totally suppressed and extinguished the Worship, and even all Notion and Memory of the Creator; inso-much that in the Days of *Abraham*, the Worship of the Creator, was no where to be found, but in the little city of *Salem*, or in the Tents of *Abraham's* Family; all the rest of the World was then over-whelmed and buried in Darkness and Superstition; and soon after the Knowledge and Worship of the living God was confined within the narrow Compass of one Family only, the Family of *Jacob*; in whose Seed it was preserved more, or less, even down to the Time of the *Messiah*; when that Light was taken from under the Bushel, and diffused thence to all Countries and Nations, according to the Promise made to *Abraham*, that in his Seed should all the Nations of the World be blessed.



XXIX. So popular was this flattering Notion of the peculiar Grace, or partial Favour of the Gods, that scarce any Family would be without their domestick Gods, their Lares, their menial Goblins ; nay, so far did this alluring Superstition go, that each Person must have his peculiar Deity to take care of his Person, his Genius, his peculiar tutelar Dæmon.

XXX. THUS this selfish partial Notion of having a God to themselves, a God wholly to themselves, that gave such a bent and turn to the Minds of the *Israelitish* Nation, such a proneness and obstinately stupid Inclination to, and hankering after Idolatry, which their Prophets so much complained of, and reproached to them under the Term of their Stifneckedness, and the Hardness of their Hearts. They could not without regret bear the Thought that their God should be the common Father and Benefactor of Mankind ; that their God should be the God of all the World, the God of all Nations, the God of the *Gentes*, or *Gentiles*, as 'tis rendered, the God of other Nations, as well as of their own ; in a Word, that he was not their own peculiar national Deity ; they wanted a God to themselves, such a God as were the Gods of their Neighbours, a God that would personally reside and dwell amongst them, and have no Good-will to any People but themselves. And for the like  
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Reason, they could not broke the impartial Notion of a *Catholick Messiah*, of a common Benefactor to the whole Universe, of a *Messiah* of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*; a *Messiah* of all other Nations, as well as of the Seed of *Jacob*. Such is the Iniquity, such the unreasonably partial and selfish Inclinations of Mankind; which Priestcraft industriously works up to such violent Prejudices, against all Efforts of equal and unbyassed Reason, as wholly to obscure their Understandings, and lead them blindfold, not only into the grossest and most palpable Errors and Absurdities, but also into the deepest and most abject Slavery and Bondage to Hierarchick Tyranny,

XXXI. THUS did the crafty Priesthood gild over and sweeten the fatal Pills of Idolatry and Hierarchick Slavery, to make the fulsome Poyson go down glibly with the Credulous and Unwary; but forcing the nauseous Poyson down the Throats of the Wise and Thinking, with the most savage Tyranny and execrable Devices of Sacerdotal Cruelty and Malice.

XXXII. THE execrable Notion that the Gods did so delight in human Sacrifice, even in the Sufferings, Misery and Destruction of the Innocent, as well as of the Guilty; that, contrary to all Rules of Justice and Equity, the Punishment and Sufferings of the Innocent should answer for the Sins of the Guilty, that the Butchering of the Innocent should  
atone

atone for, and compensate the Offences of the Wicked ; and the Bloodshed of the Unoffending should expiate and wash away the Guilt of the Flagitious ; that the real Offenders should be discharged with impunity, and the Punishment be afflicted on the Innocent in their stead ; as this Kind of Sacerdotal Commutation, was the most flagrant Contradiction to that certain and plain Maxim of remunerative Justice, that every one should answer for his own Works, and bear the just Rewards both of his own Iniquities and Righteousness, without bearing either the Guilt and Punishment on one Hand, or reaping the Merit and Reward on tother Hand of whatever was not properly his own Doing : Under the sacred, Names and venerable Pretences of Justice Piety and Religion ; substituting and setting up the grossest and most manifest Injustice, and the most savage and irreligious Cruelty and Barbarity. As this execrable Notion was on one Hand one of the grossest and most horrible of all the Abominations of Idolatry ; so on tother Hand, was it one of the most profitable Doctrines to the holy Priesthood, as being of the utmost Importance to the Advancement and Support both of their Wealth, and also of their Power and Dominion over Mankind ; 'twas a most dreadful Instrument of Sacerdotal Power, Terror and Revenge, hanging over the Heads of the affrighted Layety, who for fear, some of the imaginary Vengeance  
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of those savage Deities, the some of the furious Persecutions and real Vengeance of their holy Officers, were forced to submit themselves, and become Vassels and Tributaries to the greedy, insolent, rapacious Priesthood ; devoting not only the fairest of their Flocks and Herds, and the fairest and strongest of their Slaves, or Servants ; but even the Strongest and Fairest of their Sons and Daughters to the supposed Use of the Gods ; but really to the Use and Service of the crafty Priests. The Guilt, forsooth, of the offending Master will surely be expiated and wash'd away by the innocent Blood of the unoffending Servant ; and the Sins of the Parent will be clean wiped out by the innocent Blood of the unoffending Children ; all Transgressions and Omissions of the Parents are effectually atoned, and compensated by his laudable Piety and Devotion, in giving up and resigning to the Will of the Gods, even the darling Issue of his Body.

XXXIII. THUS do knavish Priests terrify and wheedle the amazed and deluded People out of the best and most Serviceable and valuable, of their Slaves, and out of the fairest and strongest of their Children, as well as out of the fairest and best liking of their Flocks and Herds ; which when dedicated to the respective Deity, become then fully at the Will and Disposition of the crafty Priest, either to put them to sale, and suffer them to be redeemed at a Price, or Ransom ; or to reserve  
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'em for his private Lust, or servile Druggery ; to or destiny them as miserable Victims to his holy Butchery, and sacrifices to his savage Deity ; the Time of which horrible Execution is plainly in the Breast of the holy Priest, either to speed, or to delay the same for ever, if he will. Thus did they get into their Clutches, as their absolute Property, numbers of People, absolutely at their Mercy and Devotion, to destiny, or damn, to Death, or Life, to servile Druggery, or Lust, to Misery, or Ease.

XXXIV. 'T WAS thro' this execrable Notion of the Gods delighting in the suffering Misery and Bloodshed of poor Mortals, even of the Innocent and Unoffending, as well as of the Guilty, that the bigotted and wretchedly priest-ridden *Syrians*, offered up their own Children to their savage God, *Molock* ; and that *Pontius Pilate* mingled the Blood of his butchered, tho' unoffending Subjects, the *Galileans*, with his Sacrifices, to render them the more acceptable to his blood-thirsty Gods ; 'twas to countenance this Notion that the Priests of *Cybele*, and the Priests of *Baal* pretend, at least, to cut and gash their own Skins and Flesh, and shed their own Blood, in the celebrating the solemn Rites and Ceremonies of their respective Deities.

XXXV. BUT if the Sufferings, Misery, and Blood-shed of the Innocent, was so grateful to the Gods, how much more grateful

ful sure must be the Sufferings, Misery and Blood-shed of those they hate. How must the darling Passion of Revenge heighten the Pleasure of their savage Appetites? If the crafty Priesthood can so far impose upon the stupid Credulity of the People as to make them believe the one, how easy is it to impose the other? If unprovok'd the Gods delight in savage Cruelty! How much more cruel and savage must their Disposition be, when stimulated with Anger and Revenge? How eagerly must the savage God thirst for the Blood of such unhappy Mortals as dare offend him and his holy Priests? How impatiently will he long to wreak his Vengeance on the devoted Head? How furiously will he rage and tear and mischief all about him, 'till the devoted Victim shall be delivered into the avenging Hands of his holy Butchers? Whoever dares offend the haughty Priest is sure to fall a dreadful Victim to his wrathful God? The wrathful Priest, and his no less wrathful God, must be at any Rate atoned with the Blood of the unhappy Wretch, or the whole World must perish. Plagues, Earthquakes, Famine, Inundations, Fire and Ruin are denounced against the People for the Sake of the impious Offender of the Gods. The Offence of one is charged to the Account of the whole Body of the People; the Innocent and Unoffending must perish with the Guilty, all involved in the same Ruin, rather than



the offended Priest and angry God shall miss of their Revenge; the Conclusion is plain! 'tis better that one should die, than a whole Nation perish. Be who he will, he must die for the People! The unhappy Wretch must surely be given up into the butchering Hands of his blood-thirsty Enemies, and fall a miserable, helpless Victim to sacerdotal Malice and Revenge; a dreadful Sacrifice and Warning to all who dare gainsay, or any wise oppose any the Interests, or sacred Pretensions of the Ambitious and incroaching Priesthood.

XXXVI. THUS with their enthusiastick Terrors did the crafty Priesthood keep both Prince and People in the most dreadful Awe and Submission to their Will. Whatever Earthquake, Thunder, Tempest, Inundation, Sicknes, Dearth, or other publick Calamity, casually, at any Time beset, was a glorious Opportunity for the holy Priest to wreak his Revenge, to sate his Lust, or glut his Avarice; the angry Gods must be atoned, and some devoted Head must go to pot; the sacred Shambles must smother with the reeking Gore of some Contemner of the Gods, or of their holy Priests. But if, perchance, both Prince and People are all so uniformly submissive and conformable to all the Interests, Dictates and Pretensions of the haughty Priesthood, that they have no one Object of their Vengeance in their Eye; some noble Youth, or beauteous Virgin, must then be sacrificed to

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appease the sullen Malice of the capricious petted Deity ; and 'tis the trusty Priest that must declare the Choice. What tender Parent then but dreads the baneful Choice ? Whatever Parent hath a favourite Son, or Daughter, must compound, he must at any Rate stand well with the holy Priest ; least the capricious Deity should take a fatal Longing for the Darling ; and by his holy Priest demand it to his sacred Slaughter-house. The baneful Doom hangs over every quaking Parent's Head ; nor Prince nor Subject, may be privileged against the dreadful Choice ; all equally at the Mercy and Devotion of the haughty Priest.

XXXVII. Thus, *Chalchas*, the famous *Gracian* Hierarch, or High-Priest, taking Advantage of the Winds, by Chance, adverse to the confederated *Gracian* Fleet, did by his holy Craft and sacred Artifices, find Means to compel his Sovereign, the mighty *Gracian* Emperor, to deliver up his darling Daughter, the young and beauteous *Iphygenia*, into the absolute Power and Disposal of that haughty Priest, under the Colour and Pretence of sacrificing the royal Virgin, to atone the angry Gods ; but really to sate his own brutal Lust, and gratify his Pride, in humbling his insulting hapless Sovereign. The roguish Priest, putted the Change upon his Gods, kept the beauteous Virgin to himself, and butchered a worn-out Harlot in her stead. Such was the Power, Pride, and audacious Insolence

le nce of that insulting Priest, relying on the blind Credulity and Attachment of the deluded and bigotted Multitude, ever devoted more to the Interests and Pretensions of the self-designing Priesthood, than to the just Rights and legal Sovereignty of the civil Magistrate.

XXXVIII. THE crafty Priesthood having by the irrefragable Argument of bloody Persecution silenced all Gain saying and Opposition to their self-ended Doctrines and Pretensions; and by the fatal Aid of the civil Powers reduced the People to an absolute and uniform Subjection and Obedience to themselves; now in its turn make use of the popular Devotion and Attachment as a Rampart to cover themselves against the legal Authority of the civil Magistrate, and, without mincing the Matter, boldly cast off and renounce all Subjection and Obedience to the civil Powers; claiming as of Divine Right, first an Independency only of the State, an Immunity and Exemption for their Persons and Possessions from being subject to their Country's Laws, and to the Jurisdiction of the civil Magistrate; and then, at length, claiming a direct Supremacy, or Sovereignty, over both; not only assuming to themselves Mitres, Scepters, Diadems, and other Tokens and *Insignia* of Sovereignty, but also actually usurping to themselves, and effectually exercising a Power and Authority to



to ride and controul both Prince and People.

XXXIX. BOTH the Persons and Possessions of the holy Priesthood are sacred, forsooth, and must by no Means be subject to any human Laws, or Jurisdiction, They, forsooth, are menial Officers and domestick Servants of the Gods; and therefore subject to the Gods alone, and answerable to the Gods alone for what they do. Again, their Possessions are, forsooth, the Possessions of their Gods, they, good Folks, are only Stewards and Collectors for their Gods: Whatever is given to the Priest, is given to his God; 'tis sacred and must never be applied to any prophane Use, or Purpose. Whatever Wealth and Treasures are once dedicated to the Gods, must be exempt forever from all prophane Power, or Jurisdiction; they are sacred and must not be lyable to any publick Contributions, or subject to answer any Exigencies of the State, without the gracious Leave and Bounty of the holy Priesthood; let whatever Exigencies pinch the State, or necessary Burthens overload the People, the civil Magistrate may not, must not, dare not touch those sacred Treasures, to ease the Burthen of the People, or to save the State from Ruin, without obtaining first the gracious Leave of some proud Hierarch, or haughty Pontiff, who'll surely make his Sovereign dearly pay for every Penny he shall grant. To touch those sacred  
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Treasures, without the sovereign Pontiff's Leave, to compel the rich luxurious Priesthood to contribute with the impoverished and exhausted People, towards the necessary Burthens and Charges of the State, are Crimes of the deepest Dye, against the Priesthood and their Gods; 'tis Sacrilege, 'tis robbing the Temple, robbing the holy Priesthood, and the immortal Gods; for which the injured Gods, and wrathful Priest will wait their Time, to work their sure Revenge upon the Heads, both of the sacrilegious Monarch, and such of his Subjects as durst adhere to their legal Sovereign against the Interests and Pretentions of the holy Priesthood. Thus do the crafty Priesthood, first draw the publick Wealth into their own Coffers; then turn the Weight of all publick Burthens upon the poor exhausted Layety; first drain the Peoples Substance into their own Coffers, by the mercenary Traffique of venal Expiations, Atonements, and Propitiations, to the utter Impoverishment of the State; and then screening themselves from bearing any Share of any the necessary Burthens of the Publick.

**XL.** THE civil Powers did not seem to be in the least aware of this pernicious Practice of the crafty Priesthood in gulling the Subjects of their Wealth, and draining the vital Substance of the State, whilst the Priesthood seemed to be content, to be subject to the civil Pow.

Powers, equally with the Layety ; it seemed indifferent to the civil Magistrate whether the Wealth of the Nation were lodged in the Coffers of the Priesthood, or of the Layety, so as it still remained amongst his Subjects, and equally lyable to the necessary Burthens and emergent Exigencies of the State. But when the haughty purse-proud Priesthood, confiding in their Wealth and Popularity, relying on their immense Riches, and the blind Devotion and Attachment of the People to the Sacerdotal Faction, durst boldly pretend a Divine Authority to withdraw themselves from their Allegiance and Subjection to their lawful Sovereigns, and set up an independent Power and Dominion amongst themselves ; a Power and Dominion from which no Prince nor People could be any wise privileged, or exempt ; when the purse-proud saucy Priesthood durst claim a right Divine of being privileged from all Subjection and Obedience to the civil Magistrate and their Country's Laws ; and durst set up an independent Hierarchy, or Enthusiastick Dominion of their own, to which both Prince and People must be subject and obedient ; from Obedience to which, nor Prince nor People could have any Priviledge, or Exemption. When they durst pretend to sacred Privileges and Immunities to exempt and screen both their own Persons and Possessions from bearing any Share of any the publick Burthens of the State ; but neither Prince, nor People, must



must plead any Privileges, or Immunities from being both tributary and absolutely Submissive and Obedient to all the arbitrary Impositions of the lordly domineering Priesthood, then did the civil Power too late discern the fatal Effects of nursing up within their own Bowels a formidable Enthusiastick Power, even'till it grew too great and strong for themselves; too Headstrong and mighty even for the civil Powers to controul; not only suffering them to grow Rich and Popular, but even aiding the crafty, ambitious and incroaching Priesthood to alienate both the Wealth, and likewise the Devotion and Obedience of the Subject, from the proper Interests of the civil Magistrate, to the pernicious interfering Interests of Hierarchy, or Sacerdotal Empire and Dominion; even to the intestine rival Interests of an independent sovereign Power, erected within the Bowels of his own Dominion; an independent sovereign Power, that claims both Tribute and Obedience from his proper Subjects; an intestine independent Power that claims direct Supremacy and Sovereignty even over himself; exacting both Tribute and implicit Submission and Obedience from the Prince, as well as from his People. Thus do the saucy domineering Priesthood first cast off and renounce their liege Subjection and Obedience to their Prince and Country's Laws; then lay the Yoke of Hierarchy upon their Sovereign's Neck; reducing both him and his  
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People to Vassalage and Bondage under their sacred Hierarchick Tyranny.

XLI. **N**OR would the haughty Priesthood be content to be exempted only from bearing any Share of the publick Burthens of the State; but their Persons must likewise be exempted from any Punishment, or Censure by the civil Magistrate for any Injuries, or Crimes, they should commit against either their private Neighbour, or the State. Their Persons, forsooth, are sacred and subject each to their own God alone; they, good Folks, disdain to be accountable to any prophane, unsanctified Magistrate for any Thing they do; no, they cannot brook to be answerable to any Superior, but to their own pupil Deity, who will, no doubt, do ample and impartial Justice to the injured Neighbour and insulted Magistrate. 'Tis for the Honour of their God alone, belike, and not for any partial Interest, or self-ended Purpose of their own, that they, good Folks, refuse to submit to any Authority, but that of their own God alone, whose impartial Justice they are well assured of; and whose severely just Chastisements, Censures and Reproofs (no doubt) do so effectually keep his Priests and Servants in due Awe and Discipline, that all Checks of civil Justice to restrain them from Offence are meerly needless and unnecessary.

XLII. **T**HIS monstrous Prerogative of injuring their private Neighbour, insulting  
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the civil Magistrate, and violating the publick Rights of the Community, at pleasure, with impunity ; this dangerous Power and Immunity of doing whatever they please within the Bowels of the State, even in despite and defiance of the civil Magistrate ; this licentious Freedom and Exemption from the wholesome and necessary Check of publick Laws and common Justice ; these sacred Immunities and Independence on the State, were Claims, belike, no wise of their own seeking ; such arrogant Pretensions would not comport with their demure Modesty, holy Meekness, and profound Humility. No ; they, good Folks, could for their own Part, have been well content, to have been subject to their national Sovereign and their Country's Laws, had it so pleased their doughty Deities. No ; such their Pretensions were not of their own seeking, but the spontaneous unprompted Will and Ordinance of their gracious Deity, that they his holy Officers and menial Servants should be exempt from all Jurisdiction of the civil Magistrate, and to be subject to himself alone ; 'tis their God himself that claims these sacred Privileges and Immunities for them his Cleros, or chosen People, for them his peculiar Officers and Servants, 'tis for his own peculiar Domesticks, 'tis for his own Family that he claims these sacred Immunities ; nor will he suffer any prophane unhallowed Magistrate,



or Prince, to intermeddle with, to have any Power, or Authority, over any the domestick Affairs, or Members of his sacred Family. That therefore their God had graciously vouchsafed to institute and erect a blessed Hierarchy, or holy Dominion, amongst them his Cleros, or chosen Servants, a holy Dominion, or Government, altogether independent of any prophane Powers and human Laws; graciously appointing amongst themselves holy Rulers and Governors, some to be subordinate Magistrates, and some to be Hierarchs, sovereign Pontiffs, or Sacerdotal Sovereigns; to whom only their God had ordered them to own Obedience and Subjection, strictly forbidding them to acknowledge any Subjection, or Obedience to any prophane unsanctified Powers upon Earth; thereby preserving his sacred Hierarchy in pure and perfect Independency, pure and undefiled by any influence of Lay-Government, or human Laws. Thus do those sanctified Impostors colour and varnish over their haughty Disobedience to the civil Magistrate; fathering their own self-ended and ambitious Practices, and treasonable Usurpations and Incroachments against the Authority of the civil Powers, upon the supposed Passions and Humours of their fictitious Deities.

XLIII. WHILST the Priesthood acknowledged their Origin, their Institution and Authority to have been derived from the

civil Powers ; whilst they were obliged to own themselves to be meerly Officers appointed by the State to manage and superintend the Affair of Religion ; whilst they were obliged to own the Truth of their Origin and Authority, they could not with any Face pretend to cast off and renounce their lawful Subjection and Obedience to the civil Magistrate ; but when the unwary Magistrate had suffered them to disown the one, they soon found Means to cast off and renounce the other. When the civil Powers had unwarily aided and assisted the crafty Priesthood to engross the Wealth, Affections and Obedience of the People to themselves ; when the bigotted Multitude did uniformly, with implicit Faith, blindly submit to the Word of the Priest, to all the partial, crafty, self-interested Doctrines of the self-designing Priesthood, as to Oracles of divine and unquestionable Truth, and blindly submitted to, and obeyed all their Dictates and Commands, as to the Will and Ordinances of the Gods ; Ambition soon tempted them to make use of their Wealth and Power with the People, to cast off all Obedience and Subjection to their lawful Sovereigns, and to set up a sovereign independent Power of their own : The civil Powers having imprudently furnish'd them with Means ; a colourable Pretence is only wanting for a Handle to bring their Designs about. For the purpose therefore they gravely pretend

tend their Institution and Authority to have been derived from the Gods themselves ; their Authority is now no longer Human, but Divine ; and therefore not controulable by any meerly human Power ; *jure divino* is the Word ; their Authority is Divine, their Persons Sacred, and subject only to the Gods, from whom they have received their sacred Commission, Power and Authority. When the unwary Magistrate hath suffered that insidious self-ended Doctrine of the divine Institution and Authority of the Priesthood to be thoroughly diffused, and by the irrefragable Arguments of bloody Persecution to be firmly established as a sacred Truth amongst the People ; the crafty Priesthood take that very Notion for a Handle and Pretence to cast off and renounce all Obedience and Subjection to the civil Powers. Let that crafty Notion but be granted as a settled Principle, and the Inference is plain ; 'tis monstrously absurd, forsooth, that sacred Persons, Persons indued with divine Authority and Power, should be subject to any meerly human Power, or Authority ; that sacred Persons should be subject to prophane unhallowed Magistrates, the Sacred to the Prophane, the Hallowed to the Unhallowed ; that the sanctified Commissioners, Embassadors and Representatives of the Gods should be obliged to pay Obedience and Subjection to any prophane unsanctified Prince, or Magistrate :  
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Can they but once prevail on the Indolence, or Inadvertency of the civil Magistrate, to let them firmly establish in the Minds of the People, that fundamental Principle of Priestcraft and Hierarchy, as a sacred and unquestionable Truth, and the Game is sure their own ; the Principle once settled, the Conclusion follows, the Cry is with them ; 'tis the Cause of the holy Temple, the Cause of the holy Priesthood, the Cause of Heaven and the Gods, and who shall dare gainsay.

XLIV. THIS Independency and Exemption from their liege Obedience and Subjection to the civil Powers, is what each Gang of Priests have ever had at Heart. They so heartily despise and scorn the bubbled Layety, whom they look upon as their Cullies, their Property, their Vassals and meer Beasts of Burthen, that they cannot without the utmost Indignation and Regret, brook any Subjection to a Lay-Magistracy, whom they constantly treat with the contemptuous Titles of unhallowed, prophane, un sanctified Persons. They look upon both Prince and People as a Species of Creatures so much below themselves, that they must at any Rate obtain and enjoy the blessed Privilege of treating, both just how they please with full Impunity ; the truly, humble, meek and lowly Priesthood, only desire the modest Privilege of treating both their fellow Subjects, and their national Sovereign, as their absolute Property ; as their

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Vassals and Slaves arbitrarily without account ; that's all, good Folks, that they require, and that they must and will obtain cost what it will. The crafty Priesthood knows full well the vast Importance of such an extensive Privilege and Immunity ; they know full well that they cannot, whilst Subject to their legal Sovereign and Country's Laws, insult the one, or violate the other with safety to themselves ; therefore they resolutely determine, boldly to cast off and expressly renounce all Subjection both to the one, and to the other. But first the grand Preliminary, the necessary Ground-Work of their divine Authority must be laid and firmly settled ; for without that they have no Handle, no Manner of Pretence for casting off their Duty to the civil Powers. For the Purpose therefore they industriously diffuse and spread amongst the People the Notion of the divine Origin and Authority of Priesthood, at first privately with Gentleness and Caution, 'till the Notion, by degrees, grows somewhat habile and familiar ; then openly avow and maintain the same ; at length by the Sanction of their own Sacerdotal Decrees they establish it as a sacred and unquestionable Truth ; calumnizing, condemning and persuing with all the Rage and furious Zeal, that usually attends Sacerdotal Vengeance, whoever dare gainsay, or even seem to doubt the Truth of this so sacred Principle.

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XLV. 'Tis certain that Truth and Innocence never can, but Falshood and Imposture may, and ever do (with Reason) dread the Light, and shun all free and impartial Examination and Scrutiny; and the more gross and palpable the Imposture, the more jealous are the Managers, and the more furiously Zealous to stave off at any Rate all freedom of Scrutiny and Examination. The crafty Priesthood knew full well that this fundamental Principle, on which turns all their Scheme of Independency and Sovereign Hierarchy, could not be supported, either by the real Testimonies of Fact, or any Arguments of Reason; they were fully conscious that their Authority, be it what it will, and even their very Institution was from the civil Magistrate, and altogether subject to the Regulations of the civil Powers; they know full well that they had no divine Commission to produce, no immediate and express Commission from the Gods, personally denoting and selecting them from the Mass of Mankind, exempting them from all Subjection to their Country's Laws, and to the civil Magistrate, and conferring on them a ruling Power and Dominion over their Fellow Mortals. They knew themselves to have never been really Officers, or Servants of the Gods; but according to their Institution to have been meerly Officers and Ministers of the State, created by the civil Magistrate, and wholly subject  
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to his Authority and Power. They knew their Pretence of divine Authority and Institution to have no better Ground than the precarious Authority of their own *gratis dictums*, the suspected Authority of their own self-interested Decrees and Declarations. Therefore they guarded this tender Darling with the most furious Zeal, watchful Jealousy and clamorous Out-cry from the dreaded Attacks of the prying Critick and inquisitive Free-thinker, or whoever wou'd not take their bare Word for convictive Proof. Whoever therefore dared to controvert, or even seem to doubt the Truth of this important Principle, was sure to be condemned, and mark'd out for Destruction by the outrageous Fury of the holy Tribe; they straitway brand him with their whole Catalogue of sacerdotal Nicknames, load him with Calumnies, pursue him every where with horrid Out-cries, clap their Bear-skin on his Back, and turn him as a Monster to be stoned, or torn to Pieces by the blind, bigotted, and enraged Multitude; or else stir up the civil Powers to destroy him as an impious and flagitious Caitiff, an Infidel, a Miscreant, a Misbeliever, an Enemy to Religion, to the Gods, and to the holy Priesthood; by their incessant Clamours, and the seditious Out-cries of the bigotted Multitude, forcing the civil Magistrate to be the Instrument and Executioner of their Revenge upon the Wisest and

the Bravest of his Subjects ; on whose Wisdom, Courage, and Fidelity in adhering to him and his legal Interests and Prerogatives, he might have relyed in time of need, to stand by and defend him and his legal Sovereignty against the treacherous Encroachments and Usurpations of his ambitious, turbulent, seditious Clergy. When thus they have by the fatal Aid of the civil Powers ruin'd and destroy'd whoever durst gainsay, or controvert any their self-ended Doctrines and Pretensions ; when they have by the irrefutable and convictive Arguments of bloody Persecution silenced all Opposition, and firmly establish'd the Fundamental Principle of their divine Origin and Authority, they safely then may make the long look'd for Inference, and boldly cast off and renounce their liege Obedience and Subjection to the civil Magistrate. And what prophane un sanctify'd Layman then shall dare say no ? What Layman then shall dare assert the legal Sovereignty of the civil Magistrate, and maintain the just Rights and Prerogatives of his Prince ? Or dare to question with unhallowed Lips the sacred Rights and Privileges of the holy Priesthood ? Who then shall be so mad as fatally to dare incur the Vengeance of the holy Clan, and be exposed to the blind Rage and Madness of the bigotted superstitious Multitude, under the fatal Character of an Enemy and Contemner of the Gods, and of the holy Priesthood ;

hood ; such is the destin'd End and Purpose, and such are the natural Consequences of sacerdotal Persecution, blind Submission, and implicit Faith in the Word of the Priest as in the Oracles of Heaven. Such is the Purpose, and such the natural Consequences of coupling the Interests of the Gods with the Designs of Men, and ruining and destroying their fellow Mortals for the Sake, and in the Defence of the immortal Powers. Such is the Force of enthusiastick Nonsense, with the blind bigotted Multitude.

XLVI. THE heathen Clergy having thus, by Virtue of their divine Authority and Institution, freed themselves from all Duty and Obedience to the civil Magistrate, and from the Justice of their Country's Laws ; can now, at pleasure, violate all the Rights of civil Community ; can safely injure and oppress, can plunder, ravish, rob, and murder their fellow Subjects, and insult their national Sovereign as they please ; they now, when e'er 'tis for their Turn, can boldly stir up the People to Sedition, harangue them into Madness, and dare openly insult the civil Magistrate, even to his Teeth, and with impunity. For what prophane Prince, or unsanctify'd Magistrate, shall dare to violate the sacred Privileges and Immunities of the holy Priesthood ?

XLVII. THUS, thro' the Bigottry and Folly of the unthinking superstitious Multi-  
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tude, do the proud, insolent, outrageous Priesthood fence and secure their own Persons from the Resentments of the insulted Magistrate, and from the Justice of the Laws. But this Immunity of their own Persons only, is not sufficient to answer all the outrageous Purposes of sacerdotal Avarice, Ambition and Revenge; this sacred Privilege is not complete unless they can effectually protect their Emissaries, their Ring-leaders of Sedition, their murd'ring Ruffians, Bravoës and Assassins; their necessary Instruments of Power and Revenge; the blessed Champions and Assertors of their sacred Hierarchy and sacerdotal Rights. Their pupil Gods must therefore help them out, and find some Expedient for the Purpose. Accordingly, each Gang of Priests, with serious, demure Looks, and solemn Countenances, declare it to be the holy Will and Ordinance of their God; that his Temple should be held and esteemed sacred, and exempt from all prophane Lay-Jurisdiction; that no Officers of civil Justice should dare to approach his holy Temple, or execute any Act, or Precept, of Lay-Authority within, or near the Precinct of the sacred Residence, of himself, and of his holy Priesthood. That whatever Offender against the unsanctify'd civil Powers should implore the Protection of his Godship, should be safe and inviolable under the Shelter of his divine Protection; that his holy Temple should be

a sacred Asylum, a Sanctuary for the Distressed, a sacred Place of Refuge and Safety for all Criminals and Offenders against the State, that should implore his divine Protection against the civil Powers. Thus do the roguish Priesthood set up a Power and Prerogative of rescuing from the Justice of the civil Magistrate whatever Villains, Criminals and Offenders against the State, their Holynesses may think fit to countenance, protect and patronize: But no Asylum, no Sanctuary, no Place of Refuge must protect the Wretch that dares offend the holy Priesthood. Thus doth the crafty Priest not only withdraw himself from his liege Obedience to his legal Sovereign, and from the Justice of his Country's Laws; but also sets himself up as a Sovereign Arbiter and Judge between his lawful Prince and his other Subjects, whom his Prince shall have in his Power to punish, and whom not, for any Violation of his Country's Laws. The legal Sovereign may not exert the Justice of the Laws against his own offending Subjects, without the good Leave, forsooth, without the gracious Licence, and Permission of the lordly Priest. Thus do those sanctify'd Impostors devise and set up sacred Privileges and Immunities to fetter, manacle and cramp the legal Sovereignty of the civil Powers.

XLVIII. THE Priesthood having these Asylums, or Places of Refuge, intirely under their

their own Conduct; could thereby not only effectually protect their own Emissaries and Agents, the Instruments of their flagitious Purposes; but having it in their Power to save whom they please, and whom they please to deliver up to Justice; they also thereby obliged all dissolute, licentious, profligate Persons; all Villains, Robbers, Cut-Throats, Bravoes, Ruffians and Desparadoes, to devote themselves intirely to the Interests and Party of the Sacerdotal Faction, for the Sake of their Protection from the Justice of the Laws. The more flagitious, abandoned and profligately Wicked the Person is, the more need hath he of the sacred Protection and Patronage of the holy Priesthood; who by their mercenary Expiations and Atonements can surely save and redeem him from the Justice of the Gods, and by means of their Asylums, or Sanctuaries, can effectually protect and save him from the Justice of the Laws; therefore he must at all Adventures frankly give up, and, without reserve, sacrifice to the Interests of the Sacerdotal Faction, all Duty and Affection towards his Prince and Country. Let the most abandon'd Cut-Throat, Thief, or Robber, freely share his guilty Hire, his Booty, or his Plunder, with the Gods; let him devote an ample Share of the Spoils and Ruins of the Innocent and Oppressed for pious Gifts and Offerings to the Gods, let him but dedicate to the Use and Service of t<sup>he</sup> Gods an ample Portion of the guilty Price of  
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shedding innocent Blood, his Crimes are straight-way expiated, the Gods atoned and propitiated, and the gracious Priesthood will protect and save the devout, pious, liberally offering Villain from the Justice of the Laws. Thus do the holy Priesthood protect and patronize all Manner of Villanies and Wickedness, thereby greatly advancing both their Wealth and Power, and likewise strongly engaging the Wicked and Licentious to their Interest and Party.

XLIX. THE turbulent, ambitious and revengeful Priesthood having not only the blind Bigot, but also the lew'd, profligate and flagitious Villain universally devoted to their Service; having their sacerdotal Antidotes of mercenary Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations ever at hand, to sooth and quell all religious Fears, all Stings and Checks of Conscience and Remorse; having Wealth enough lustily to bribe, and bountifully to reward; and having Means and Power effectually to patronize and protect; they never can lack Ruffians, Bravoës, and Desparadoës to serve any Turn, or holy Job that they may have on their Hands: Whether it be to Poyson, Stab, or otherwise assassinate some naughty, obstinate, untractable Lay-Sovereign, who will not patiently submit to be either wheedled, and cajoled, or menaced and affright'ned out of his own legal Prerogatives, and sovereign Authority; or be prevailed, on to give up and betray

tray his own, or his Subject's Rights ; who dares refuse to be the Instrument of ruining his own faithful Subjects, or of sapping and subverting his own legal Power and Authority ; who durst impiously refuse to ratify and confirm any the Usurpations and Encroachments of the holy Clan, or to grant them some new Privilege, or Immunity, to the Prejudice of his own Prerogatives, or legal Rights and Liberties of his own Liege Subjects ; or otherwise incur their holy Wrath and Vengeance : Or whether they may have occasion to dispatch and rid out of the World some dangerous, free-thinking Undeceivers of the People ; or some naughty, unbigotted, unobsequious Lay-Subject, that dares adhere to the legal Interests of his Prince, his Country and his fellow Layicks, against the partial, knavish, self ended Machinations and Devices of the holy Priesthood : Whatever may be the Occasion, they cannot lack Instruments to serve the Turn ; and when the holy Job is done ; let but the pious Operator make his escape, let but his Party bear him off, or slyly favour his Escape unto the holy Sanctuary, and the grateful Priesthood, and their well propitiated Gods will both protect, and bounteously reward the gloriously pious and successful Villain. Such is the blessed Use and Purposes of sacerdotal Sanctuaries, or Assylums, and such the Benefit to the State.

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L. THUS do these holy Impostors impoverish, hamper, and priest-ride both Prince and People, under the sham Pretences of their being Officers and Servants of the Gods, of their being really useful and necessary to the Well-being of the immortal Powers, and of their being instituted and personally commissioned and warranted by the Gods themselves. But as these exorbitant sacerdotal Rights and Privileges do entirely depend on the Supposition that Men can really be useful and necessary to the Well-being of the Gods ; that the Gods have personally chosen and expressly commissioned these very Pretenders, exclusive of all others, to serve and attend the Occasions and Necessities of their frail, needy Godships ; and that in Compensation of their Services, or as Incidents and Appurtenances of their sacred Office and Commission, the grateful Gods have expressly granted to them these sacred Rights and Privileges. In failure of any one Article of which fundamental Suppositions, all Colour of their divine Authority and Pretensions must inevitably fall to the Ground. They were fully conscious that these fundamental Principles of Hierarchy, of sacerdotal Independence and Dominion, these sacerdotal Articles of religious Faith, were in themselves merely absur'd, ridiculous, and plainly repugnant to the very Notion of a Deity ; that let them be never so impudently asserted to be true in Fact, yet to any one that durst freely



Reason and impartially examine them, must be inevitably convinced that they were both false in Fact and absur'd in Reason. That the best Proofs and Testimonies of the Facts, were no other then the self-interested Decrees and Declaration of their own sacerdotai Gang. They were fully conscious that these fundamental Suppositions, so necessary, both to their divine Pretensions, and even to the very Essence of Priesthood itself, were meerly and plainly groundless and precarious. Being unwilling therefore to trust altogether to the divine Authority of their sacred Pretensions, and the blind Credulity of the superstitious artfully deluded Multitude ; they craftily devise to procure the certain and demonstrable Sanction and Authority of human Laws. For which End they cast about with all their Subtlety and Craft how to manage the civil Powers so as to induce them to ratify and confirm, and give the Sanction of human Law to their divine Pretensions, to all their sacerdotai Usurpations and Encroachments on the legal Sovereignty of their Prince, and on the legal Rights and Liberties of his faithful Subjects. They diligently make use of all their sacerdotai Arts to draw, or drive their legal Sovereign into the fatal Toils ; varying their Measures according to the Occasion ; sometimes caressing, sometimes distressing him ; taking Advantage of the unhappy Folly, Weakness and Superstitious Bigotry, either of  
Prince,

Prince, or People, to play by Turns, the one against the other with their usual Art and Skill, 'till they had made themselves absolute Lords and Masters of them both. First awing and subduing the People by the Power and Authority of the Prince into absolute Submission and Obedience to themselves; then awing and subduing the Prince himself, by the Bigottry and Superstition of the People.

LI. For the Purpose; a superstitious Bigot of a Prince, or an arbitrary lawless Tyrant, is either of them an admirable Mercate for an ambitious, vigilant, and industrious Priesthood. The timorous, hairbrain'd Credulity of the one, and the savage Inhumanity of the other, are each a blessed Opportunity, if duly managed, for their holy Purposes. The poor, easy, ductile Bigot they can sooth and terrify into whatever Measures they think fit to prescribe. By Means of their insidious Flatteries on the one hand, and their pannick Terrors on the other hand, they can dupe and lead him by the Nose just how they please. They can with their Flatteries and pannick Frights so mould him to their holy Purposes, as to become not only supinely easy and consenting to all their holy Usurpations and Encroachments, but even zealously eager to give and betray into their sacred Hands, forsooth, not only his Peoples civil Rights and Liberties, but also his own just Perogatives and legal Sovereignty. His

senseless Credulity and pannick Fears they  
 with serious Aspect and uplift Hands extol  
 and praise as the Firmness and unshaken  
 Steadiness of his religious Faith; his blind  
 Submission to all their self-ended Dictates,  
 sacred Pretensions and Demands; his Rea-  
 diness to sacrifice both the civil Rights and  
 Privileges of his Lay-Subjects and his own  
 legal Prerogatives and Sovereignty to the  
 interfering Interests and illegal Pretensions of  
 Hierarchy and sacerdotal Ambition; they  
 craftily applaud as religious Virtues by the  
 Names of sincere Devotion, and humble  
 Resignation to the Will and Pleasure of the  
 Gods. His fatal Obsequiousness in submit-  
 ting himself to be made the destructive In-  
 strument of sacerdotal Power and Revenge,  
 against which every of his faithful Subjects  
 dare honestly advise him to withstand their  
 treacherous Flatteries, and pernicious Usurpa-  
 tions and Encroachments, to assert and main-  
 tain his legal Sovereignty and just Preroga-  
 tives, and not suffer himself to be wheadled  
 and cajoled, not only out of all real Power  
 and Authority over his ambitious sacerdotal  
 Subjects, but even to betray both his Lay-  
 Subjects, and himself, even himself also into  
 Vassallage, into Bondage and absolute un-  
 conditional Subjection to Hierarchy, to priest-  
 ly Dominion and sacerdotal Tyranny; this  
 blind Obsequiousness in permitting them to  
 make him their fatal Instrument of Power  
 and



and Revenge against all such his faithful Subjects as dare honestly and courageously adhere to his and their own real Interests, or any that dare in the least gainsay, or any wise oppose any the self ended Doctrines, or Pretensions of sacerdotal Avarice, or Ambition; his pious Rage and inexorable Fury against whomever of his Subjects the offended Priesthood think fit to recommend to ruin and destruction, by the sacerdotal Nicknames of Infidels, Unbelievers, Miscreants, Misbelievers, Gainfayers, Opposers, Enemies, and impious Contemners of the Gods, and of their holy Priesthood; this pious Disposition, forsooth, so pernicious and destructive to the legal Rights and Liberties of his Subjects, so ruinous to the State, and to his own Interests and legal Rights, they craftily promote, applaud and glorify by the Names of Piety, of holy Zeal and Steadyness for the sacred Rights and Interests of the Gods, and of their holy Temples. In a Word, whatever they find for their Purpose, tho' never so pernicious to the Wellfare of the State, never so injurious to the legal Rights and Liberties, both of Prince and People, they craftily guild over with the specious Name, or Title, of some new coyn'd religious Virtue; and whatever makes in any wise against their avaritious, or ambitious Designs, must be at any rate branded and condemned as religious Crimes and dangerous Offences against the  
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sacred Rights and Interests of the Gods, and of their holy Temples. The sanctified Hypocrites with serious Aspect, and solemn Protestations of their friendly Care and sincere Regard for the true Interests and Welfare of their Prince, piously admonish and inform him, how heinous a Sin it is in the Sight of the immortal Gods, for any prophane unsanctified Lay-Prince, (tho' otherwise truly pious and religious) to exercise or claim any Dominion, or Authority, over sacred Persons, over the chosen Servants, over the peculiar Subjects of the Gods themselves; 'tis no less Crime than Sacrilege; 'tis invading the sacred Rights, of the holy Hierarchy, even the Dominion of the Gods themselves. For over Priests, none but the Gods themselves ought to have any Dominion, Power, or Authority; Priests may be answerable and subject to the Gods, but to the Gods alone; and not to any earthly or prophane unsanctified Power, or Authority. To the Power of the Gods indeed the holy Priesthood may be Subject, but not to any Power of Man; no, they are answerable and accountable to the Gods alone, for what they do; for by the express Will and Ordinance of their Gods, the holy Priesthood are exempt from all Subjection and Obedience to the civil Powers. Such sacred Persons were Subject only to the Gods, and to their holy Hierarchs, their sanctified Vicegerents here  
on

on Earth. Therefore for any Lay-Prince, or Sovereign, to exercise, or claim any Sovereignty, Dominion, or Authority over the Servants and peculiar Subjects of the Gods, was plainly invading the holy Hierarchy, the sacred Sovereignty, and Dominion of the Gods themselves; was Sacrilege of the deepest Dye, and would surely sometime, or other, bring down the Wrath and Vengeance of the injured Gods upon both Prince and People. Then do the crafty Hypocrites, with ghastly Looks, and well dissembled Dread and Terror in their Countenances, recite and tell what dismal Calamities and Plagues; what hostile Invasions, Ravages, Blood, Fire, Sword and Desolation; what contagious Pestilence, Storms, Tempests, Thunder, Light'ning, Earthquakes, Conflagrations, Dearth, Famine, Inundations, and the like, had befallen heretofore in distant Countries and Ages, on the like Occasions; of which they'll tell Ten Thousand fabulous Relations, Tales, Legends and Traditions of their own Invention, all ready framed and calculated for the Purpose. Whatever publick Disasters may have hap'ned in any nearer Times, or Countries; those they straitway impute to the like Causes, and the occasional Displeasure and Resentments of the offended Gods. Then with unlift Hands and Eyes do the crafty Impostors deprecate and seem to dread some dismal Plagues and Calamities to befall their own Country Prince  
and



and Nation for the Misdoings of their Forefathers, and the past Sins of his less pious Predecessors. That they, good Folks, had by force of their incessant Deprecations, and fervent Intercessions hitherto kept off the dreaded Evils, and pacified for a while, the justly incensed Deities; waiting with holy Patience for the blessed Opportunity of so pious, devout and religious a Prince, to do Justice to the injured Gods, and to their holy Priests, firmly establishing them in all their sacred Rights and Privileges. Advising him to teach his People, both by his pious Precepts and Example, to vie in holy Emulation with each other, who may out do in liberal Gifts and Offerings to expiate the Guilt of their Forefathers Sins, atone the angry Deities, and so avert the impending Wrath and Vengeance. Thus do they friendly admonish and exhort him to do Justice to the Gods, and to their holy Priests; so might he be a blessed Prince; so might he have a glorious Priesthood, a propitious Deity, and a happy People,

LII. By such insidious Artifices do these sanctified Traytors gull, manage and betray the unwary Prince that trusts his Interests and Affairs to their treacherous Advice and Councils. Thus do they caress, wheedle and cajole him, both out of his Revenues and his Sovereignty itself; making himself their Instrument and Tool to establish within the Bowels  
of

of his own Dominions, a rival independent Power superior to himself; from Obedience and Subjection, to whose sacred Authority nor his People, nor even he himself may be in any wise exempt; making him the Instrument of betraying and delivering into their rival Hands the Wealth and Treasures of his Nation, and of enthralling both his People and himself to the Yoke and Dominion of an intestine independent Power, that expressly claims an absolute Command and sovereign Authority over both Prince and People. Thus through their treacherous Flatteries and panick Terrors do they blind the Understanding and work upon the Weakness and Bigottry of a superstitious Prince to undo both his People and himself; delivering first his People, then himself into absolute Bondage and unlimited Subjection to the despotick Tyranny of lordly domineering Priests, under the Name and Title of Hierarchy, or *Jure Divino* Sovereignty.

LIII. WHILE they find their Prince so stupidly tractable to their Purposes that they can manage him just how they will, to betray his own real Interests, and serve all the pernicious Ends and Interests of sacerdotal Avarice, Ambition and Revenge; he then is praised and extolled as a pious, devout, religious Prince, a zealous Champion of the Gods, and glorious Asserter and Defender of the sacred Rights and Interests of the Tem-

ple and the holy Priesthood. But let him at length awaken from this Enthusiastick Dream of superstitious Piety and religious Lethergy of Mind and Understanding; let him at length awaken and discern the Ruin and Havock that has been made of his own and of his Subject's Interests, and dare at length resolutely to refuse them any their pernicious Demands, or dare to disobey any their sacerdotal Precepts, or Commands. He'll find the Weather straightway changed upon him; he'll find nothing but Thunder, Lightning, Storm and Tempest from the sacerdotal Quarter; nothing but holy Censures, Curses, Execrations, malicious Calumnies, Misrepresentations, bitter Revilings, Railings and Reproaches; Tumult, Clamour, Sedition, popular Insurrections, Rage, Madness, open Treasons and Rebellions. The *quondam* pious, virtuous, religious Prince must now wear the sacerdotal Bear-Skin; he is now become an Infidel, a Miscreant, an Apostate, an impious Rebel and Revolter from his dread Subjection to the sacred Hierarchick Powers; an irreligious, impious Enemy and Contemner of the Gods, the holy Temple and the Priesthood. Then will he find the sacred Treasures of the holy Temple, the pious Offerings of himself and Subjects, Wealth piously devoted to the Service of the Gods, now no less piously applied to maintain a holy Rebellion, a religious War against his own legal Sovereignty: Then will he with  
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Sorrow see his own *quondam* Subjects, but whom his own imprudent Zeal had forced and drove into Subjection and Obedience to his sacerdotal Rivals ; now will he with sorrow see them blindly adhering to his Sacerdotal Enemies, and furiously ecchoing back and bellowing out with open Throats on every side the holy Treasons, Calumnies and Clamours of the seditious and enraged Priesthood, against himself, and whatever faithful Subject dare still adhere to him and his legal Sovereignty, against the treasonable Machinations of the formidable hierarchick Powers. Then will he with sorrow see the fatal Fruits of his imprudent Zeal and furious Persecution ; then will he see his poor priest-ridden *quondam* Subjects, now not his, but Vassals and Subjects to the hierarchick Powers, blinded with Superstition and habituated to implicit Obedience and Submission, ranging themselves beneath the sacred Banners of the holy Temple, and blindly Obedient to the Command of his sanctified hierarchick Rebels. Deserted then, on every side, will he too late discern the fatal Consequences of blind Bigottry and stupid Superstition ; then will he see the fatal Use of blind Credulity and implicit Submission and Obedience to a Power not his own ; then may he in vain bewail his own blind Zeal and furious Persecutions against the Wisest, Bravest, and most Faithful of his own Lay-Subjects, for no other Crime then not

submitting blindly to the Impositions and Encroachments of his hierarchick Rivals; then may he see the blessed Consequences of that happy Uniformity, which he himself so zealously and successfully had laboured for, now brought about; then may he see his own *quondam* Subjects, all uniformly subject and obedient to an intestine independent Sovereign Power set up and establish'd within the Bowels of his own Dominions; all uniformly subject and implicitly Obedient to a Power now too strong for him to quell, too hard for him to cope, or struggle with; a Power to which, even he himself, must now, spight of his Teeth, submit, crouch down, and humbly truckle

LIV. 'Tis certain that no Man can be perfectly subject and obedient to two several independent interfering Powers. If he be perfectly subject and obedient to Hierarchy, or sovereign Priesthood, he must of necessity cast off his Allegiance, or lawful Subjection to his national Prince, so far as that Allegiance, interferes with the Interests and Pretensions of, and clashes with his Obedience to the hierarchick Powers. When Duties interfere the higher Duty surely must take place; what is but Prophanes must certainly give way to what is Sacred; and that which is but Human to that which is allowed to be Divine. When our legal Duty towards our national Sovereign interferes with  
that

that Obedience which is required as of Right Divine to the sacred Hierarchick Powers, who then must be obeyed? The legal Sovereign, or the sovereign Priest? Which Duty then shall we renounce? That which we are taught, which we are enjoined and forced to own to be Sacred and of Right Divine, or that which we are taught to contemn as unsanctified and prophane? Which Duty shall we then prefer, and which renounce, that which is grounded but on human Law; on prophane unsanctified human Law; or that which had its rise from Ordinance Divine? Allow but the Distinction, and the Choice is plain; the Prince will be deserted, and the sovereign Priest obeyed. When ever sacerdotall Subtily and Craft have got their independent Hierarchy firmly establish'd and confirm'd by human Laws, and holy Persecution hath enforced these blessed *jure divino* Doctrines to be uniformly receiv'd, accepted and submitted to by the crushed and enthralled, and at length intoxicated and bigotted People; the Consequence is certain, the national Prince must crouch and bow down, and the sovereign Priest will ride triumphant. Two severall independent Claims to sovereign Authority and Dominion over the same common Subjects, can never long subsist in peace; their mutual Jealousies and clashing inconsistent Ends, Interests, and Measures, can never Admit of any cordial Friendship,  
or



or lasting Peace between them : Perpetual Discord, Struggles, Faction, intestine Broils, Wars, and Confusion, must inevitably ensue, 'till the one can find Means, absolutely to subdue the other, and either totally suppress the rival Power, or reduce it to a Necessity, at least of becoming Subordinate, and holding their Authority meerly from, and in dependence on the other ; if the civil Powers can't reduce the Priesthood to submit to derive, and hold all their Power and Authority from their Prince and Country's Laws, the civil Powers themselves must submit to hold their Authority and Power at the Will and Pleasure of the lordly domineering Priest. For no Man can serve two Masters ; and a Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

LV. So manifestly dangerous is it for a Prince to suffer any Enthusiastick Pretensions to divine Authority and Powers, to Powers and Authority independent of their Prince and Country's Laws, to be set up and foster'd within the Bowels of his own Dominions. Such Independency, if suffer'd firmly to take Root, will in Progress of Time, certainly aspire at direct Supremacy, or Sovereignty ; and then of two rival Powers, which will the Populace obey ? Will not the stupidly credulous, deluded and bigotted Multitude, adhere to, and obey a Power and Authority which they esteem and reverence as Sacred and Divine, a superior Power and Authority, that

that cannot only absolve them from, and utterly discharge all Duty of Allegiance, all Tyes and Obligations of human Laws; but can also controul the Vengeance and the Favours, even of the immortal Powers, and render the Gods themselves, Wrathful, or Propitious, towards whom they Please?

LVI. WHAT Madness is it then for a Prince, by force of savage Persecution, to drive his Subjects to the fatal Necessity of implicitly submitting to and obeying absolutely without Condition, Limit, or Reserve, a Power rival to his own Authority? To arm his Rivals with a Power to distress, ruin, and destroy his own Subjects, and compel them to become absolutely subject, obedient, and entirely devoted to the Authority and Interests of that very rival Power against his own; to constrain and force, even the most Faithful of his Subjects, to renounce their Understandings, and blindly submit to all the self-ended Dictates, Doctrines, and enthusiastick Pretensions of his sanctified Rivals, as to Oracles Divine, as to sacred and unquestionable Truths; tho' never so palpably and self-evidently false, ridiculous and absurd in their own Nature; and never so pernicious and destructive to his own legal Authority, and sovereign Power in their Consequences; such is the End and Purposes, and such the natural Consequence of suppressing all true Wisdom, all true Freedom of Thought and  
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Contemplation of the cœlestial Beings, and impartial Examination into the supposedly divine and sacred Doctrines and Pretensions of Men. Such is the Hand, a crafty and ambitious Priesthood do usually make of a superstitious and bigotted Prince.

LVII. THE savage Tyrant they bring to their Lure, by force of the most servile Cringing, Flatteries, and most Ignominious Assentation and Obsequiousness; with humble sedulous Officiousness they indulge and gratify him in all his Passions, tho' never so outrageous; they parasitically colour over and guild, with virtuous Names and Epithites, the foulest of his Vices, and even sanctify the very blackest of his Actions; in order to ingratiate and work themselves into his Favour, they officiously insult the Oppressed, and with right parasitical Address, they calumnize, reproach and rail at those whom he hath injur'd. They tell him that his People are of common Right, his Slaves, his meer Property, an absolute Gift of the Gods to deal with as he pleases; that nothing he should will to do could be Wrong to them; they tell him that all Restraints of human Laws are injurious Infringements of his divine Right and Power over them and their Possessions; ignominious Fetters, not to be born by a Prince of such a gallant Spirit. They praise the Magnanimity, heroick, Bravery, and undaunted Boldness of his Spirit,



rit, in breaking thro' the musty Rules, and Cobweb-tyes of Laws and publick Faith; they frankly applaud the Justice of the Facts, and treat with Ridicule and Scorn the Innocent and Oppressed, making the Grief and Miseries of the Afflicted, the Subject of their savage Mirth and Drollery; they even prompt him on to Violence and Outrage, and offer themselves the ready Instruments of his Oppressions. With such officious Obsequiousness and Assentations, together with boundless Promises and loud Professions of infinite Submission, Obedience and Devotion without condition, limit, or reserve, in every Thing, without Exception to his sovereign Will, they sooth and tickle him into full Trust and Confidence of their Fidelity and Attachment to his Service, 'till they've engrossed him wholly to themselves. Then do they prostitute his Power and Authority without reserve, to serve their own ambitious Ends and Purposes. The rampant Priest then arm'd with unresisted Power, can boldly without controul, beat down, make havoc, and destroy whatever may obstruct the holy Ends of sacerdotal Avarice, Ambition and Revenge. Then may they with unresisted Might, and with Impunity break thro' and fiercely trample down all legal Mounds and Fences, ordained to secure the Persons and possessions of the Subject from illegal Violence and Wrong; then will they,

thus arm'd with sovereign Power, boldly beat down, demolish and destroy all legal Obstacles to sacerdotal Usurpations and Encroachments; then will they thus armed with their Sovereign's Power, inexorably Sacrifice without Remorse to their Revenge, whoever dares gainsay, or anywise oppose their own self-ended Doctrines, and ambitious Pretensions; then without Mercy, Pity, or Remorse, will they, unresisted, and impunly, Ravage, Plunder, Persecute, Ruin and Destroy, at Pleasure, their *quondam* fellow Subjects, the miserable defenceless, hopeless Layety, 'till they have destroyed, or reduced them to uniform Submission and Obedience to all their self-ended Doctrines and Pretensions; 'till they have reduced them all uniformly to profess absolute Submission and Obedience without condition, limit, or reserve, to all their sacerdotal Dictates and Commands; 'till by Force of holy Persecution, they have reduced the miserable, wretched, distressed Layety to change their legal Subjection and Obedience to their Nations Prince, for absolute Submission and Obedience to the arbitrary Dictates and Dominion of their sacerdotal Riders, without condition, limit, or reserve. 'Till they have reduced them to absolute Slavery, Vassalage and Bondage, to the sacred Hierarchick Powers.

Whilst

LVIII. WHILST thus the unreflecting Tyrant, deluded by their treacherous Professions of infinite Submission and Obedience to his Will, intoxicated and bigotted with the fulsome Poyson of their fallacious and deceitful Flatteries and Praises, blindly permits them to make his Power and Authority the fatal Instrument of not only harassing, oppressing and destroying his poor distressed Lay-Subjects, but also of sapping, overthrowing and destroying his own legal Sovereignty ; whilst thus his Power and Authority are commodious and necessary to their sacerdotal Purposes ; his Praises and his Power then must have no Bounds. Spight of all Vice, all Violence and Wrong, he still must be extolled as a most virtuous, godly, pious, and religious Prince ; spight of the most egregious Impolicies, unruly Outrages, random Follies and Imprudence, he still must be applauded as a Prince of infinite Prudence, Wisdom and Goodness ; whilst both his Will and Power are sway'd and guided by the crafty Priest, his Will is sacred, and his Power Divine ; his Power is then above all human Laws, and may be bounded only by his Will ; 'tis then alone that regal Power is sacred divine ; 'tis then alone that Kings can do no Wrong. Whilst his Authority is necessary to countenance their mercenary Devices, and all their sacred Engines of holy Extortion, thro' which they wring out and



squeeze the vital Substance of the poor exhausted Lay-Subjects into their own sacerdotal Coffers; they'll frankly let him into an ample Share of the sacred Booty: Whilst his Authority and Power protect them in all their holy Outrages and Rapines on the Persons and Possessions of his poor Lay-Subjects, (the common Quarry and defenceless Prey of hungry Courtiers, and of ravening Priests;) they'll generously invite him to joyn in the holy Plunder. Whilst his Authority is used as the Sword of Hierarchy, to pillage, plunder, and destroy the poor Lay-Subjects as they please; the People then, the poor Lay-Subjects, (for Priests are independent still, and *jure divino* exempt) the poor Lay-Subjects, are not then a Trust and Charge to be protected and preserved, as well as govern'd, and commanded by the civil Magistrate. They were not committed to his Care for the sake of Government and Protection, but an absolute Gift of Heaven; his meer Property, as his Horse, his Ass, his Sheep, or Oxen, for Use, or for Destruction, for Druggery, or for Slaughter; all legal Boundaries of Magistratick Power, all fixed and settled Laws, all legal Mounds and Fences to secure the Subject from illegal Violence and Wrong, they represent as injurious to his Sovereign Authority and Power; then they'll frankly sacrifice to his unruly Lust of lawless Power; those legal Mounds and Fences are likewise

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Barriers and Obstacles to the illegal Invasions of sacerdotal Avarice, Ambition and Revenge upon their Fellow-Subjects Persons and Possessions ; those therefore they'll frankly sacrifice to him ; provided he'll maintain and preserve inviolate their sacred Privileges and Immunities : He may do what he will with his Lay-Subjects, provided that he will ratify to them all their sacred Pretentions, and establish and confirm them in all their holy Usurpations and Encroachments.

LIX. WHILST thus the bubbled Tyrant's Power is made the Sword of Hierarchy to beat down and destroy all Obstacles and Oppositions to their ambitious Purposes ; he then is styled a pious, devout, godly, religious prince ; Champion and Defender of the Gods and of the holy Temple ; a zealous Asserter of the sacred Rights and Interests of the Gods and of their holy Priesthood. Then can his Wisdom never err ; then can his Power do no Wrong. Thus do they sooth and gull him, while they effectually rob him of the Obedience and Subjection of his People, and gently strip him of all real Power and Authority. But when they have craftily established their sovereign Hierarchy beyond all Power of Opposition, let him then dare to disoblige them at his Peril ; then let him claim Performance of their passive Complements, their boundless Professions of infinite Obedience and Submission  
to

to his sovereign Will, without condition, limit, or reserve; let him then dare infringe the least tittle of their holy sacerdotial Privileges and Immunities, dispute with them any tittle of their sacred Pretensions to exemption, independence and unbounded Sovereignty; let him but in the least dispute their sacred Supremacy and Sovereignty over his *quondam* Subjects and himself; or any wise oppose their holy Usurpations and Encroachments; the Cry is changed, the Champion of the Gods is now a Rebel against the sacred hierarchick Powers; he now must be condignly punished and chastized! And now have at him with a Vengeance. The Humble, Meek, Submission, Passive, Non-resisting Priesthood, are all up in Arms; the sacerdotial Larum-bell now rings aloud; the holy Temple is (a lack the Day!) in danger! The sacred Rights and Privileges of the holy Priesthood are sacrilegiously invaded; Religion and the immortal Gods (a lack the woe the Day;) are at the Point of being quite undone. The hideous Cry arises, the bigotted Multitude hard in Throngs around their sacerdotial Guides; Noise, Tumult, Sedition, Rage, Madness, Fury, Clamour and Confusion every where prevails; the fatal Bearskin is clap'd upon the Back of the deluded and abandon'd Prince; forlorn, forsaken, and unpityed he falls a miserable Victim to the fell Vengeance and treacherous



rous Ambition of his sacerdotal Instruments and Prompters on to lawless Violence and Outrage. Thus do the crafty Priesthood play the Prince and People each against the other, so as best may serve the sacerdotal Turn ; shifting and setting up alternately those two occasional Cries, the usual Watch-words of sacerdotal Mischief ; the one that the Prince's Authority is divine, and his Power boundless, (*viz.* when made the Tool of sacerdotal Avarice, Ambition and Revenge ;) the other, that Religion and the holy Temple are in danger, (*viz.* whenever they would animate the Populace to work the sure Destruction of their Prince ;) thus do they work and manage both the superstitious Bigot, and the lawless Tyrant, to answer the holy Ends of Sacerdotal Avarice, Ambition and Revenge.

LX. THE tyrannick, savage, lawless Disposition of a Prince is so commodious an Opportunity for an ambitious Priesthood to make their Harvest, that let a Prince be never so good, so just, and moderate of his own natural Disposition, if they can once ingratiate themselves into his Confidence and Favour, 'tis their constant Method and Endeavour to blind his Understanding with their insidious Flatteries and sacerdotal Fallacies ; to corrupt his Mind, and inspire his Breast with the unruly frantick Lust of arbitrary lawless Power ; to prompt him on to lawless Violence and Outrage ; and when they have brought

brought his Temper to the sacerdotal Pitch, then can they use his Power as their Tool, to bring about their own outrageous and illegal Purposes. But a virtuous, wise, courageous Prince, whom nor their Fallacies can blind, nor their insidious Flatteries can corrupt, nor all their pannick Terrors can affright from steddly Virtue, and his own Subjects real Interests; such a Prince is by no Means for their holy Purposes. A Prince who wisely looks upon his People's Happiness and Safety, as his own; who looks upon his Country's Laws, not only as the Bounds, but also as the steddyeft and sureft Ramparts and Safeguards of his own Prerogatives and legal Sovereignty against any the secret Machinations, or open Attempts of insidious Treasons, or barefac'd Rebellions. Who wisely deems the Wealth, the Happiness and Affections of his People as his greatest, surest and only real Strength and Power against any foreign, or intestine Attempts, or Machinations against his legal Sovereignty, and just Prerogatives. A Prince too Wise to suffer a rival Power to make use of his Authority and Power to persecute, distress and ruin the Wisest, Bravest, and most Faithful of his own Subjects, and crush them into absolute Submission and Obedience to their self-ended Dictates and Commands: A Prince too Wise, not to discern the knavish Drift and fatal Consequences of their self-ended, crafty

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Doctrines and Pretensions; too Wise not to be jealous of their sacred hierarchick Usurpations; too Couragious and Brave not to oppose their holy Encroachments and Invasions, either upon the Persons, or Possessions of his Leige-Lay-Subjects; or upon his own Prerogatives and legal Sovereignty. A Prince, so Virtuous, so Wise and Brave, is by no Means for their holy Purposes. He must, or be corrupted, or destroy'd. Could they by any holy Artifice debase his Understanding to the pitch, or level, of stupid blind Credulity, and work him up to pannick Fears and superstitious Bigottry; or could they corrupt the generous Benignity, Justice and Moderation of his Temper, inspire him with the unruly Lust of lawless Power, and the frantick, wild Ambition of destroying and oppressing, instead of protecting his poor helpless Subjects; they knew how in either Case to work and manage him into their holy Purposes: But if he be obstinately Prudent, Wise and Brave, and incorrigibly Virtuous; no other Choice remains, he must be dispatched out of the way; he must be destroy'd at any rate; all Hands aloft, 'tis the Cause of the holy Temple, the Cause of the Gods and of the holy Priesthood. Fain would the holy Villains clap their wonted Bearskin on their Sovereign's Back; fain would they censure, brand and stygmazize him publickly with their wonted Catalogue



of too often fatal Nicknames, and animate the superstitious Multitude against him ; fain would they do it, if they durst : But against such a Prince the Cry would hardly take, 'twould scarcely be popular enough for the Purpose, and the Attempt is too hazardous to be put to the Risque. For a while therefore they must content themselves with privately poisoning his Character and Reputation with secret Calumnies and Slanders, privately reviling, murmuring, and repining at his whole Conduct, diligently misconstruing all his Doings, and maliciously presaging and foreboding his Designs, and industriously labouring to instil groundless Fears, Jealousies and Discontents into the Peoples Minds. At length their Wealth provides some proper Villain for the Purpose ; a sudden Stab, or secret Poison effects the holy Job ; a Party's ready lay'd to favour and secure the Villain's safe Retreat ; the pious, blessed, glorious Murderer betakes him to the Refuge of the holy Sanctuary, and under the sacred Patronage of the Gods and of their holy Priests, the pious Villain is effectually secur'd from both the popular Resentments, for the Loss of such a Prince, and from the Justice of the violated Laws.

LXI. SUCH seems to have been the Origin of Idolatry and Priesthood, and such the blessed Artifices and Means by which the holy Priesthood built up their sacred Hierarchy to  
such

Such a Pitch of Power and Sovereignty as to enthral the Potentates and Princes of the Earth. Such were the Means by which they engross'd the Wealth, the Sway and absolute Dominion of the World into their own Hands. Where 'tis to be observed that Idolatry and Priesthood had the same \* Orogen, and were instituted together, both at the same Time, and by the same Authority; Idolatry, or Idol-worship, being on one hand a Device first set on foot by the civil Powers, for the Purpose of rend'ring the Persons of the supreme Magistrates and their Kindred more dread and sacred in the Eyes of the People, Kings and Princes being the real Progeny and Descendants of those supposed Deities; whose Ancestors, if Gods, then must they be themselves of course of a Race Divine (according to the well known heathen Complement) and therefore reasonably to be presumed to have more Favour, Interest and Power with the Gods, than the Rest of Mankind, who were nothing of Kin to them: And Priesthood being on tother hand an Office instituted meerly for the Sake of Idolatry, or Idol-worship, those publick Officers who were appointed and established by the civil Powers for the constant Attendance, Care and Management of the holy Idols and their Wor-

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*N. B.* Idolatry and Priesthood were in Vogue among the *Egyptians*, the *Midianites* and most Nations before the Days of *Moses*.

ship, being called Priests ; the Office of Priesthood widely differing from the Management and Administration of the Thanksgiving Feasts of private Families, both in Purpose, Function and Authority ; Priesthood being manifestly an Office of publick Authority and Concern, and Priests manifestly Officers, or Servants, of the State, or Publick.

LXII. 'Tis also, to be observed further ; that as Priesthood was instituted purely for the Sake of Idolatry ; so the Use that hath been ever made of Idolatry and Priesthood was as a Device to impose upon the People, a Notion that some particular Men had somewhat of Divinity more in their Persons, were some how nearer ally'd to, and had more Favour, Interest and Prevalency with the immortal Beings, than the Rest of Mankind ; and that those divine Favourites were by the immortal Powers ordained to rule and sway the World, meerly for their own Sakes, meerly for their own Ends and Purposes, without any Regard to the common Wellfare of Mankind ; with this Difference only, that those Pretensions of divine Nature, Favour and Dominion, which were at first peculiarly applyed to Kings and Princes only, the crafty Priesthood did by degrees communicate to themselves, assuming the same after a time to themselves in common with their Sovereigns, styling themselves likewise Divines, or divine Persons, and pretending to di-



divine Favour and Dominion joyntly with the civil Powers; 'till, at length, they wholly dropt the civil Powers, and struck their national Sovereigns quite and clean out of the divine Commission, engrossing the Pretention and Claim of Hierarchy, or holy Dominion, wholly to themselves. Those crafty Officers, to whom were committed both the Contrivance and Management of those Delusions, and likewise the Direction of the dreadful persecuting Power, by Means of which, the Imposture was first established, and afterwards supported and maintained; having thereby reduced the People to an absolute and uniform Submission, Obedience and Devotion to themselves, found Means thereby to turn short upon the civil Powers, and apply the whole Menage of the Imposture to their own Advantage. For,

LXIII. BY the good Offices those crafty Impostors were supposed to do to the Gods, and by their daily Conversation and Intimacy with them, 'twas easily presumed that they were very much in their Favour and good Graces. And having by degrees insinuated into the People a Notion that their sacerdotal Office was of divine Institution, and their Persons appointed by the Gods, themselves, thereby both tacitly disowning and renouncing their real Origin and Authority from the civil Powers; and also creating in the People a more dread and solemn Veneration

ration of their own Persons; they thence took the Handle to pretend to somewhat of Divinity, not only in their Office, but even in their own Persons; assuming to themselves the Titles and Appellations of Divines, or divine Persons, of sacred Persons, of Persons holy, hallowed, sanctified, or established in the Favour of the Gods; intimating plainly to the People that they were not only as much in favour with the Gods as their own Progeny, as much as the very Progeny of the Gods themselves; not only as much as Kings and Princes, but even more; that they had not only as much, but even more Divinity in their own Persons; nay, that they had as good a Right Divine, or even a better, to Power and Dominion than any Kings, or civil Potentates whatever; and accordingly assum'd a Right Divine of imposing upon the People, Rules, Decrees and Ordinances of their own devising, without any Authority from the civil Magistrate; claiming at first indeed a Power and Authority over the People only, but a Power co-ordinate to, and independent of the Power and Authority of the civil Magistrate: But at length assuming direct Supremacy and absolute Sovereignty over both Prince and People, compelling both the one, and the other, to submit to, and obey whatever Rules, Decrees and Ordinances they should think fit to impose; raising

sing themselves by degrees from being meer Officers of the State, meer Creatures of the civil Powers, to become absolute Hierarchs, or enthusiastick Sovereigns over both Prince and People. Such is the constant Tendency, and such the natural Consequences of those dangerous fanatical Pretences to divine Institution and independent Powers.

LXIV. So pernicious and destructive to the civil Powers were Idolatry and Priestcraft; so manifestly for the worse did the civil Powers change the easy, benign and universally wholesome Duties of the Catholick Religion for the Delusions and Oppressions of Idolatry and Priestcraft. Nor were Idolatry and Priestcraft less pernicious to the People; those sacerdotal Tyrants impoverishing, distressing and ruining them by endless Demands and Exactions, for the pretended Use and Service of their insatiably hungry and ever craving Deities; most grievously loading, hampering, encumbering and oppressing them with their infinitely numerous sacerdotal Edicts, Ordinances and Decrees; miserably cramping their Liberties with infinitely numerous Prohibitions, Interdictions and Restraints; fettering, clogging, cumbring and intangling them with the most irksome multiplicity of both uneasy and unnecessary Abstinances and Restraints, even from Things no wise noxious, or evil, either to themselves, or to the Publick; loading them un-



unmercifully with the most cumbersome and unnecessary Burthens of infinitely numerous Impositions, rigorously exacting the most strict Performance of infinite Duties, meerly spurious and in no wise conducive, either to the private Benefit of the Performers, or to the common Welfare of Mankind; driving with Commands, checking with Inhibitions, and goading them on every side with hellish Cruelties and Persecutions; wretchedly harrassing, crushing, ruining and destroying them under the fell Pretence of defending and supporting the Interests and Service of the Gods; of compelling Obedience to the Will and Ordinances, and of destroying and extirpating the Foes and Adversaries to the Persons, and the Interests of the immortal Beings; rendering both Prince and People wretchedly unhappy, reducing them to the miserable, anxious and uncertain State of being in the Hands and Power of arbitrary, lawless, atheistical and unmercifully cruel Tyrants, without any Check of Justice, Law, or Conscience; robbing both Prince, and People of the mutual Protection Safety, Comforts and Endearments of civil Government, regulated according to the Precepts, and enforced by the Motives of genuine and uncorrupt Religion; the truly impious, atheistical, irreligious Priesthood industriously eluding, frustrating and suppressing both the Ends and Means of civil Government and true Religion; depriving Mankind of all the Benefit, and leaving

ing them no other Fruits of fœderal Society, but Bondage, Poverty and Misery ; Bondage and Slavery, as well of Mind as Body, under the most oppressive Yoke of rampant Hierarchy and domineering Priesthood. As will more fully appear upon a closer Survey of the Principles of Heathenism, or Priestcraft, in the several Points of religious Faith, Worship, and Morality.

LXV. NOR are the common Principles and Pretensions of Heathenism, or Priestcraft, less palpably false in Fact, and absurd in their own Nature, than pernicious in their Consequences ; being so manifestly dissentaneous and repugnant to both Sense and Reason, that 'tis a constant and a necessary Maxim of Priestcraft by all Means, by all Manner of Violence and Cruelties to suppress all Liberty of Free-reasoning and of frank and generous Conversation, furiously branding as Infidels and Atheists whoever dares freely search after Truth, and thoroughly examine the Grounds of their self-ended Doctrines and Pretensions ; strictly enjoyn- ing stupid blind credulity as the highest Duty ; and inexorably punishing as the deepest Crime all prudent Wariness of being imposed on and decieved ; furiously persecuting, ruining, and destroying, as Foes and Adversaries to the Gods, whoever will not blindly trust the Word of Man.

LXVI. NOTHING certainly can be more suspicious, nothing can render any Doc-  
ESSAY II. O trines

trines, or Pretentions, more deservedly suspected, nothing can be a surer Indication, or convictive Argument of their Falshood and Improbability, then the sedulous Endeavours of the Authors, or Abettors, to avoid all free and full Inquiry and Examination into the Grounds, and Certainty thereof. A perfect Freedom of inquiry into the Truth of Facts, and of unprejudiced Reasoning on the Nature of Things, being absolutely necessary to impartial Judgment. Such Freedom may indeed be dangerous to Falshood and Imposture ; but never can be so to Probity and Truth. Probity and Truth can never fear, or be any wise endangered by any Enquiries, or Examination, or hurt by any Discovery ; conscious of no Evil, they can fear no Shame ; having nothing to be ashamed of, or disowned, having no Deformity, nor Sophistication to be concealed ; can therefore need no false Light, Concealment, or Disguise, but constantly appear with the fullest Beauty when naked, and in the fullest Light. Probity and Truth can never fear, or be any wise endangered by any Liberty of Search, Enquiry, or Examination, nor be hurt by any Discovery : But Knavery and Imposture may indeed be endangered by a free and full Liberty of Examination, and utterly ruined and defeated by Discovery ; and therefore may well dread, as adverse to their dark Designs, those Lights of Nature, Sense and Reason, which were bestowed on Man for the very Purpose to detect and



and defend himself against Falshood and Deceit. And the more gross and palpable the Imposture, by so much more anxiously Vigilant, and furiously Jealous, ever are the Impostors of all Examination and Discovery.

LXVII. Now as to the Faith, Credit, or Belief, required of the People by the heathen Clergy, tho' the crafty Priesthood did plainly make themselves the Object of what they called religious Faith; the Faith which they exacted of the People, not being Faith in God (the only proper Object of religious Faith, as well as of religious Worship :) But Faith in the Priest; implicit Faith in the Word of the Priesthood; a blind Credulity, or groundless Trust and Confidence in the Sincerity and Truth of whatever Doctrines, or Pretensions, the Priesthood should impose upon them, tho' never so palpably false, absurd and contradictory to Sense, to Reason, and to themselves. Yet as the Acts and Characters of their supposed Gods were the Subject of those Doctrines, to which the Priesthood required the Submission and Assent of the People; so by examining into the general Characters of those supposed Deities, we may plainly discern what were those Doctrines, or Principles, on which they founded their Pretensions; and which they required the People to believe upon their own bare sacerdotal Word, without any convictive Proofs. Where instead of an Omnipotent, Allwise, Self-sufficient, perfectly Good and just Being; in-

stead of a tender, compassionate, long-suffering, generous, disinterested, impartial Father of Mankind : Instead of such a perfect, and truly glorious and amiable Being : We shall find the Character of a heathen Deity to be a Compound of all the Vices, Follies and Infirmities that could render any Object odious and contemptible, without any one, truly amiable, or laudable Ingredient in the whole Mass ; a Being unreasonably partial, humerfome and capricious ; professedly avaritious, corrupt, mercenary and unrighteous ; detestably malicious, ill-natur'd, cruel and blood-thirsty ; and most contemptibly needy, helpless, silly and half-witted ; a froward, clumsy, awkward, left-handed Monster, knowing much better how to mischief others, than any wise to help himself. For instance.

LXVIII. How capricious and unreasonable do they represent him in his Humour : On one Hand, how extremely prejudiced against the Generality, against the Bulk and Mass of human Kind : How unreasonably, unfavourable and averse towards them, without any previous Ground of Blame, Demerit, or Offence, on their Part : Loathing, Scorning, Detesting and Abhorring whole Multitudes of innocent Persons, as unhallowed, profane, unsanctified, unclean, abominable ; refusing to admit, or accept any, even the most humble and sincere Addresses and Supplications from their Hands ; forbidding them all Liberty of Access to his Presence,

Prefence, treating them in all Respects with the utmost Scorn, Contempt and Detestation; and that without any, even the least Colour, or Pretence of Guilt, Transgression, or Default in them; but meerly thro' his own Capriciousness, Antipathy and Prejudice; he mal-trails and punishes them not for any Guilt, but meerly because he hates them; and he hates them not for any Offence in them, but meerly because he chuses rather to hate than love them. On tother hand, how partially Fond and unreasonably Favourable do they make him towards some select Favourites and Minions, elected and destyned to boundless Favours and Rewards, without any previous Ground of Merit, or Desert, in them; and without any other Ground, or Reason, for such partial Distinction and Discrimination, but his own Caprice and Humour; he would do so because he would; he would punish the Innocent, and reward the Undeserving, because it was his Humour; because it was the Caprice of his Humour; he would because he would. Whilst guiltless some, and unrepached with any Charge of Blame, are causelessly doomed and destyned to perpetual Dis-favour, Reprobation and Disgrace, under the undeserved Nicknames of unhallowed, prophane, unsanctified, common, unclean, abominable Persons: Other some are hug'd, caressed, and undeservedly loaded with unmerited Rewards.



wards and Favours: Whilst on one hand, the Gross of Mankind is so detested by him, that whatever is done by them is unacceptable, loathsome, odious and abominable in his Sight; on tother hand, his Cleros, his Clergy, his select Favourites and Minions are so beloved, that nothing is acceptable to him but what is done by them; and whate'er is done by them cannot be done amiss; whate'er they ask, he grants; whate'er they grant, he ratifies; whate'er they will, or wish for, he ordains; whate'er they dictate, he decrees; whatever they decree, he blindly executes; their Word is infallible, their Will a Law; whate'er they do, or say, that he approves and sanctifies. They are his Cleros, his Elect, his Darlings, Favourites and Minions. The rest of Mankind must all fall down before them; must honour them, serve them, and obey them; must be their humble Drudges, Slaves and Vassals; those sanctified Minions, those established Favourites, are all destinyed to Honour, Power and Dominion; are all divinely constituted Taskmasters, Lords and Hierarchs, or holy Riders over the rest of Mankind, must all ride and domineer, and lord it over, even the Kings and Princes of the Earth, and that *jure divino*, even by the express Decrees and Ordinances of the Gods. To such a Pitch did the heathen Clergy carry the supposed Partiality of the Gods; plainly suggesting all the rest of Man-

Mankind to be hateful and abominable to the Gods except themselves alone.

LXIX. THIS supposed Partiality of the Gods seems to have originally born a very different Consideration (as has been observ'd above, from what the Priesthood afterwards brought it to; consisting only at first on one hand of that Distinction and Favour which the Gods might be reasonably presumed to bear towards their own Progeny, towards Kings and Princes as Persons of the Race Divine; and on tother hand, of such a scornful, squeamish Antipathy as the Great and Wealthy of Mankind do usually bear towards the common People; whom the Priesthood represented as too uncourtly and unpolite to be acceptable to the dainty, nice and squeamish Deities; taking thence a Handle to exclude whom they thought fit from the Celebration of their sacred Mysteries; whence the excluded Populace acquired the Title and Appellation of *prophanum vulgus*, *vulgus obscenum*, the common, unclean People, the unhallowed Laos, or Layety; the Word *Prophane* meaning nothing more than being shut *extra fanum*, out of the Fane, or Temple; according to the usual Proclamation made by the Priests on such Occasions, *abeste profani*, get out ye filthy Rabble, ye Laos, or Layety, ye polluted, common, unclean People; the Word Laos, including all the promiscuous Croud of undistinguished Persons,

sons, that were turn'd out and shut out of their Fanums, or Temples, on those Occasions; as the Word Cleros, by way of Contradistinction did include all those Persons, whether Princes, Priests, or other Persons and Officers of Distinction, that were admitted to be present at the Celebration of those sacred Mysteries; and again whatever was counted common, was by the Priesthood of course reck'ned as polluted, filthy and unclean. For the more the People revered and adored the Priesthood, the more proud the Priesthood grew, and the more they scorned and contemned the People, treating the inferior Rank of People as if they were Creatures of a Species quite different from themselves, a Species of Creatures some how of course polluted, filthy and unclean; so that as on one hand the haughty Priesthood magnified and exalted themselves by the Titles and Appellations of holy, hallowed, or sanctified; so on tother hand, they, by way of Scorn and Contempt, distinguished the Laos, or common People, with the disdainful Appellations of prophane, unsanctified, unhallowed, filthy and unclean. Such seems to have been the Origin and first State and Meaning of those Distinctions of Cleros and Laos, hallowed and prophane, sanctified and unclean Persons.

LXX. Where 'tis to be observed that this squeamish Antipathy of the Gods was at first supposed



supposed to be only against the *Vulgus obsca-*  
*num*, the filthy Rabble, the unfashionable,  
 rude, uncourtly common People ; and not  
 by any Means against Kings and Princes,  
 Persons of the Race Divine, the very Progeny  
 of the Gods themselves ; who were therefore  
 originally deemed in the highest Degree, and  
 the most peculiar Manner, sacred, holy  
 and established in the Favour of their dei-  
 fied Ancestors ; and were accordingly ad-  
 mitted to be present at the Celebration of  
 their most sacred Mysteries, or secret Cere-  
 monies ; 'till the crafty Priesthood having  
 reduced the People to an uniform and abso-  
 lute Devotion and Obedience to themselves,  
 in order to lessen the civil Powers in the Ve-  
 neration and Esteem of the People, durst  
 saucily exclude and shut out, even their own  
 Liege-Sovereigns out of their Fanums at the  
 Celebration of those supposedly sacred My-  
 steries, putting even Kings and Princes upon  
 the same level with the promiscuous Rabble ;  
 applying to them likewise, the same con-  
 temptuous Appellations, of unsanctified,  
 prophane, unhallowed, common, and un-  
 clean Persons ; and expressly ranking even  
 Kings and Princes, even the very Progeny  
 of the Gods themselves, amongst the Laos,  
 or Layety, the common undistinguishing  
 People. The haughty, scornful, self-ended  
 Priesthood, allowing no Mortals whatever,  
 any degree, or share of Grace, or Favour, with

the Gods, but themselves alone ; all the rest of Mankind, being a meer Abomination in their Sight. So extravagantly partial did the heathen Priesthood represent their supposed Deities.

LXXI. How directly opposite is such a Character to the impartial Goodness and universal Benignity of the infinitely Good and gracious Creator, the common Father of Mankind, who impartially regards all his Children with the Tenderness of a common Father ; who makes no Fish and Flesh amongst them, who makes no partial, or invidious Distinctions and Discriminations of Favour, or Dislike, amongst his unoffending Children, to make without any Ground of Reason, some Favourites, some Reprobates, some Elects, some Cast-aways : Who has plainly no partial Respect to any of their Persons, nor makes among them any Distinctions, or Discriminations of Favour, or Dis-favour, otherwise than according to their Works, according to their Merit, or their Misbehaviour. Who has no unreasonable causeless Antipathies, Aversions, or Prejudices against any his unoffending Children, or capriciously finds Fault and objects against the very Works of his own Hands ; who holds none of them, as an Abomination in his Sight ; who esteems none of his own unoffending Children more unhallowed, common, or unclean, than any other of them, nor churlishly refuses, without a Cause, to admit any  
their

their humble and sincere Addresses; but plainly permits equally and impartially to all, to Rich and Poor, to High and Low, to Wise and Simple, Learned and Illiterate, even to all Mankind alike, the same Freedom of Access to his gracious Presence, and Liberty of offering up immediately in their own Persons their humble and sincere Petitions, Supplications and Acknowledgments. So truly, so impartially, so universally Tender, Gracious and Benevolent to all Mankind is the very God, the only true God, the August Creator of the Universe, that he seems to delight in styling himself the Father, the tender, compassionate, long-suffering, merciful, good and gracious Father of Mankind.

LXXII. So manifestly absurd are those sacerdotal Principles of the capricious Partiality of the Gods, and of their general Antipathy, and causeless Hatred against Mankind; yet so necessary to Hierarchy and Priestcraft are those very Principles, that on them only are founded, some of the very chiefest Points of Hierarchy and Priesthood; insomuch, that to give up those Principles, were in effect to give up both Hierarchy and even Priesthood it self. For as on the Supposition of that general Antipathy of the Gods, against the Mass and Bulk of Mankind, is plainly founded, and on that alone, all that fundamental Pretence of the Use and Necessity of sacerdotal Intercessions; all the Pre-



tence of a Right Divine, of Mediation, or going between their fellow Mortals and the Gods ; so on the supposed Partiality and causeless Favour of the Gods towards some select Minions, or Favourites, are founded all their hierarchical Pretentions to *jure divino* Superiorities, Dominion and coercive Powers over their fellow Mortals. For, as on one hand, were the People suffered to believe that the Gods had no partial Antipathy against their Persons, but would graciously and favourably accept their humble and sincere Offerings and Addresses immediately without Offence ; were they suffered so to believe, the Conclusion's plain ; what need, or occasion could there be for any mercenary, sacerdotal Advocates, or Intercessors ; why should any one put himself to the Trouble, Charge and Hazard of employing any others to do for him, what he might do as well, or better for himself ? What he might with at least as good effect do for himself, without the Costs and Charges of any Fee, or Hire, and without the Risque of blindly trusting his own Affair to the Sincerity and Diligence of any hackney Agents, or mercenary Solicitors ? What Business would there then be for any sacerdotal Messengers, or Proxies, between the People and the Gods, if the People could do themselves their own Affairs with the Gods ? The Consequence is plain, the Priests might pick their Nails for want of Business. So necessary to that fundamental

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Supposition of the peculiar Efficacy, Use and Necessity of sacerdotal Meditations and Intercessions for their fellow Mortals with the Gods, is that harsh and absurd Notion of the Gods Antipathy and causeless Hatred against the Generality of Mankind; such is the Use, the Priesthood make of that most harsh and most absurd Notion, and so necessary is it to their sham Pretence of being divinely authorized Solicitors for their fellow Sinners; as tho' it could be better and more adviseable for any one Sinner to employ another to do his Business for him, then to set heartily himself about it, if he himself were as well qualified to solicit his own Business as any other for him. So on tother hand, 'tis plainly on that absurd Supposition of the causeless Partiality and peculiar Favour of the Gods, to them their Cleros, their select Minions and Favourites, and on that alone, that the proud aspiring Priesthood found their Claim of a divine Right of Priest-riding and Domineering over both Prince and People; setting themselves above their national Princes and legal Sovereigns, haughtily distinguishing themselves by the lofty enthusiastick Titles of *archoi hieroi* Hierarchs, holy Sovereigns, Rulers and Governors of Mankind; by such enthusiastick Titles and Appellations, distinguishing themselves from their national Princes and Liege-Sovereigns, whom they contemptuously style and contradistinguish by the scornful Titles and Appellations of *archoi profanoi*, and  
*archoi*

*archoi laicoi*, profane, un sanctified, *plebean* Governors and Rulers ; for such plainly is the Import of that opprobrious Distinction of Hierarchs and prophane Lay-Magistrates. But on what, forsooth, is it that they found those swelling Titles and mighty Claims of Superiorities, Dominion, and coercive Powers, not only over the People, but even over Kings and Princes ; even over their own Liege-Sovereigns ? On what are they founded ? Not on human Laws, not on the Edicts and Ordinances of human Persons, but on the supposed partial Favour, but on the supposed partial Edicts, Ordinances and Decrees, even of the Gods themselves, in Favour of them their peculiar Favourites and Darlings, and by the Gods revealed to them alone, who have therefore a Right Divine to trample under Foot all civil Rights and human Constitutions ; a right Divine to tyrannize at Will and Pleasure, and Lord it over all their fellow Mortals ; a Right Divine to ride both Prince and People. This Exclusion first of the Rabble, then of Kings and Princes from sharing in their sacred Mysteries, seem to have been the first Instances and Origin of sacerdotal Excommunications. Such, and for such Purpose seems to have been the heathen Notion of the divine Partiality and groundless random Predetermination of human Fates, or Dooms ; some to Election, Grace and Favour, without any previous Ground of Merit ; and all the Rest to Reprobation, (or Rejection,) Condemnation and Dis-favour



[ III ]

Dis-favour, without any previous Ground of Guilt, or Blame, So plainly Necessary to the Pretensions and Designs of Hierarchy and Priestcraft are those harsh and absurd Insinuations of the partial and causless Favour and Dis-favours of the Gods. So unreasonably partial, humerfome and capricious a Being did they make a heathen Deity. And again.

LXXIII. How base, ungenerous, self-ended and narrow-spirited do the heathen Priesthood represent their Deities in all their Views and Measures? How insatiably ravening and greedy of the Wealth and Substance of poor Mortals? How exorbitantly Covetous, Mercenary and Corrupt in all their Dealings, without any generous disinterested Regards to the Wellfare of poor Mortals? Suffering themselves to be openly and avowedly sway'd by the corrupt, ungenerous Mōtives of Gain, Self-interest and Bribery, even in the most sacred Points of Right and Justice, as well as of meer arbitrary Favours; each mercenary Deity professedly making his Judgment Seat his Mercate, bartering and chaf-fering his Judgments, his Vengeance, his Favours and Rewards for Presents, Treats and Junquets; suffering his Vengeance to be flac'kned and rebated; his Wrath and Justice to be soothed, soft'ned and atoned; the Guilt of the most flagrant Crimes and Villanies to be expiated, purged and wiped away; his divine Protection, Favour and Rewards  
to

to be purchased, and himself propitiated, won and gained over to connive, abet and patronize, even the most habitually, hardened, obdurate and impenitent Offenders, all by the Force, Influence and Merits of mercenary Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings ; without any the least Proof, Shew, or Pretence of Reformation, Repentance, Restitution, or Compensation to the Injured and Oppressed. No Boon so great but what the mercenary God will frankly grant, or at least his mercenary Priest will frankly promise to the liberally offering Votary ; but no Justice, no Mercy, no Favour for the empty handed Suppliant.

LXXIV. BEHOLD his doughty Godship seated aloft upon his dread Tribunal, hungry and peevish, wrathful and unsatisfied ; breathing forth Judgments, Vengeance and Destruction against offending Wretches, the abandon'd Objects of his righteous Indignation, Wrath and Justice ; fierce, rigid, and inexorable, 'till seasonably glutted, feasted and regaled with pious Sacrifices, Treats, and Junquets, and his holy Officers, full fraught and loaden with costly Gifts and Offerings, the pious Bounties and Munificence of devout Offenders, a competent and ample Portion of the Booty, the Spoil and Plunder of oppressed Innocence, religiously and devoutly dedicated and set a-part for Piety and good Works, to treat his Godship  
and

and his holy Officers, and render them propitious and favourable. The good-natur'd Thing then melting, and quite overcome with the bounteous Devotion, Godlyness and Piety of the liberally offering Offender, cannot find in his Heart to be any longer angry, but strait grows deaf to all the Cries of injured Innocence ; he nods upon his Judgment-Seat ; the full-fed Godling falls asleep with the Sop in his Mouth ; the Sword of Justice drops from the slack'ned Grasp of his well greased Fingers ; the Guilt of the Offence is expiated, and quite done away ; the Fact is hallowed and sanctified by the Merit of the Bribe ; the happy Offender becomes a pious Benefactor of the well-atoned and propitiated God and of his holy Priests, and a meritorious well-deserving Object of their sacred Protection, Patronage and Favour.

LXXV. So corrupt, so mercenary, so unjust did the heathen Priesthood represent their supposed Deities ; insomuch, that the whole System of heathen Worship and Morality, both seems to have consisted of nothing else but meerly of Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings, and of a blind Obedience to the Will and Dictates of the Priesthood ; as tho' the Gods had no Regard to any Consideration whatever, but only to the Gratifying their own insatiable Avarice, and the Advancing the Power and Dominion of their select Minions and Favourites, the Priests.



LXXVI. IF we seriously consider the Nature of Things, and attend to the plain and genuine Meaning and Signification, as well as to the Sound of Words and Names, we shall manifestly find that no Injustice, Bribery and Corruption can be conceived more flagrant and abominable than what holy sanctified Atheists do avowedly charge upon their Gods. What (in the Name of common Sense) are all their mercenary sacerdotal Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations, but down-right Traffiquing, Bartering, and Trucking the venal Pardons, Favours and Indulgences of the Gods for Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings? What are their corporeal Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings but Feasts, Banquets, Treats and Junquets; but down-right Presents, Boons and Bribes offered to the Gods for no other Intents, or Purpose, but professedly to purchase their venal Favour and Influence, their mercenary Justice? Do not the crafty Priesthood expressly promise, by Means of corporeal Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings, to propitiate, or procure the Favour of the Gods? Do they not undertake by Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings to atone and pacify the Wrath and avert the Vengeance justly due to Crimes and Villanies? Do they not engage by corporeal Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings to expiate, to do away, and quite annihilate the very Guilt of Sins, of Crimes and Villanies, even without any Re-  
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stitution, or Compensation, to the Injured and Oppressed? Nay, are they not so shamelessly Impudent in this barefaced mercenary Trade of Heaven-Jobing, as to perswade the People that for the Sake of what they impiously call Piety and good Works, that for the Sake of Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings the Gods may surely be prevailed on, not only to dispence with, discharge and excuse their liberally offering Votaries from the Observance of any the most sacred and necessary Duties of true Religion and Morality, but also to connive, licence and indulge them in the full Practice of all Crimes and Villanies, with full Freedom and Impunity? What can be grosser Partiality? What Bribery more barefaced and abominable? What Injustice more manifest and flagrant? Durst any but real Atheists avowedly charge such monst'rous Blasphemies and Slanders on their Gods? What Blasphemies more horrible could be charged upon the Gods by those whom Priests call Atheists, Infidels, Miscreants, and Contemners of the Gods, then what are daily charged upon them by their Priests themselves? But to proceed; what was the very Function of the sacerdotal Office, but to deliver to the Gods those holy Bribes, those *sacræ dotes*? What was their Function, Use, or Business, but to be the publick Bribers, the bribing Favourites of the Gods; to collect and receive those pious Gifts and Offer-

ings from the People, and then to convey and hand them to the Gods? Of what other Service, Use, or Benefit, could they the Priests be to the People, but only thro' their supposed Intimacy, Favour, Interest and peculiar Prevalency with the Gods to procure the Bribes, the Presents, Gifts and Offerings of Mankind to be graciously accepted by their mercenary Gods; And in return, procure for Mankind the stipulated Pardons, Favours and Indulgences from those well-bribed Deities? And on the other hand, of what other Service, Use, or Benefit, could Priests be to the Gods, but only to barter, truck and traffique with Mankind the venal Pardons, Favours and Indulgences of those trading Deities, their mercenary Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations; and in return procure from Mankind plenty of Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings for those hungry craving, avaritious Gods? Such plainly were the Oblations, such the Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations, and such the very Function of the heathen Priesthood.

LXXVII. OF such Trade plainly did the whole System of heathen Worship consist; the Priests being supposed to be the Agents, Factors and Brokers of the Gods, expressly commission'd for the Purpose; and furnished with full Powers and Instructions to grant to their offering Votaries whatever Boons, or Favours, they should ask, provided that they



they would come up to the Price. Nay, so excessively fond of this holy Traffique, so abandonedly covetous of Gain, and so shamelessly devoid of all Regards to Justice, Merit, Innocence, or Guilt, did they represent their Gods, as to suppose them to have absolutely bound themselves without Condition, Limitation, or Reserve, to ratify, confirm and execute in all Events, whatever Bargains, or Engagements, their holy Brokers should make in their Behalf. And indeed such Powers seem almost absolutely necessary for the Expedition and Effectual caying on the holy Trade; for what pious offering Chap would be the Fool to part absolutely from his Wealth and Substance in all Events, without an absolute Assurance of having his Penny-worth for his Penny? What pious Dupe so silly as to deliver to the Priest the stipulated Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings, without some peremptory Assurance of the desired Expiations, Atonements, or Propitiations? 'Tis plain that whatever comes within the sacerdotal Brokers holy Grasp, becomes straightway sacred, dedicated and devoted to the Use of his God, and cannot be dissecrated and returned again: So that, on one hand, unless the God makes good and ratifies the stipulated Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations; the poor offering Cully is plainly bilked of his Bargain, and choused and trick'd out of his Offerings by the jug-  
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ling Priest. On tother hand, unless the holy Brokers had such discretionary Powers, what an Obstruction would it have been to Trade, if good Sir Priest, at every Job he took in hand, must make his offering Cully stay, and cool, perhaps, upon the Matter, whilst he consults the Oracle of his God, to learn how far his Godship may approve the Terms proposed, before his Crafty Holyness must absolutely strike the Bargain? What time might so be spent? What Opportunities be lost? What Loss and Damage to the Trade? How much more expeditious and commodious are full and peremptory Powers, when the holy well-skilled Broker can take his Chap whilst in the Mind, and strike the Bargain in a Twinkling, and without ifs, or may be's, boldly say the Word, it shall be so. So ungenerously and unrighteously self-interested do they suppose their Gods, so excessively corrupt and regardless of Justice, Right and Merit, of Guilt, of Innocence, and every Thing but Gluttony and Gain; let them but have enough of Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings, and for the Rest their Priests may do just what they please themselves; the good-natured, easy, full-fed Deities will find no Fault with them, but will frankly approve and ratify whatever they do.

LXXXVIII. SIR Priest hath now, forsooth, the full and absolute Controul and Disposition of both the Favours and the Vengeances of his

his God ; he can effectually dispence, withhold, bestow, doom and award both the one and the other ; Sir Priest is all in all himself ; propitiate him, and he'll effectually propitiate his God ; gain but Sir Priest with ample Gifts and Offerings and he'll frankly engage, and that effectually for his God ; for he can even forestal, direct and controul the very Tribunal of his God ; he can authoritatively anticipate his Judgments, Predetermine his Decrees and Sentences, and at his own Will and Pleasure predestine the Favours and Vengeance, the Rewards and Punishments of his God, who both must and will, in all Events, ratify, confirm and execute whatever Sir Priest shall do, or say. Sir Priest himself can now effectually condemn the Innocent, and acquit the Guilty. Can now brow-beat, condemn and punish whoe'er dare be tenacious of his own ; and effectually absolve from Guilt and Punishment the open handed Villain, who freely pays the Price, and devoutly sets a part and dedicates to Piety and good Works, (to feast the Gods, and liberally gratify the holy Priesthood), an ample Portion of the Booty, Spoil and Plunder ; no need of Restitution, or Compensation to the Injured and Oppressed ; the holy Priest can do the Job as well without ; his God is too gracious to insist on such unprofitable Terms, nor will good Sir Priest discourage his gift-offering Votaries by such dis-



disabling Preliminaries; by Preliminaries so discouraging to bounteous gainful Villany, and so manifestly obstructive and detrimental to Piety and good Works.

LXXIX. AND indeed what Priesthood would not rather have their God a Patron and Protector to the full-handed liberally offering Villain and Oppressor, who devotes his Wealth and Booty to good Works, in pious Largeesses and Bounties to the Gods and to their holy Officers; than to do unprofitable Justice to the Injured and Oppressed, thereby disabling the piously disposed Votary to do good Works? Were any Priesthood to represent their God as perfectly generous and disinterested in all his Concerns and Dealings with poor Mortals, as perfectly just and unbiassably Impartial in the Dispensation of his Judgments; who had no ungenerous Regards to Gain, Self-interest, or Lucre; nor would either deny, or delay Justice on any Consideration whatsoever; whose upright, just and steddy Judgments, Vengeance, Punishments, Rewards and Favours could not be swayed, or anywise influenced, or affected, by Gifts, or Offerings; who would do Justice gratis, to Rich, to Poor, to every one indifferently, without admitting any Rewards, or Gifts, or to himself, or to his Agents; where then would be the Gain, or Profit of the Priesthood? Where would be then the sumptuous Banquets, Feasts, and Sa-

Sacrifices, the costly Presents, Gifts and Offerings, wherewith the Gods are treated and regaled, and whereby the holy Priesthood are so immensely enriched? What Suppliant would then exhaust himself to feast and bribe the Priesthood, if their God would have no regard thereto? What jolly, thrifty, well-fed Priesthood would serve such a God? Who would be the *Gehazais* of such a Master, who would neither accept any Rewards, or Presents, himself, nor countenance his Officers, or Servants, in so doing?

LXXX. FOR this Reason 'tis that the crafty, self-ended Priesthood do so zealously endeavour to suppress the Worship, Memory and Notion of the unbyassably just and righteous Creator, (who will invariably judge and measure to every one Rewards and Punishments according to their Works;) as altogether inconsistent with their corrupt and avaritious Purposes: And in his stead set up for Objects of religious Worship, the Ghosts of deceased human Persons; to whom they can with less apparent Absurdity impute these Appetites and Vices which are so commodious and necessary for their sacerdotal Purposes, but utterly inconsistent with the Character and Attributes of the common Father of Mankind. So professedly Avaritious, Corrupt, Mercenary and Unrighteous do holy Atheists represent their supposititious Deities.

LXXXI. AND again ; as the Priesthood do plainly attribute to their supposed Gods, the most enormous Partiality and Respect of Persons, the most insatiable Avarice, the most shameless Bribery and Corruption, and the most flagrant Injustice that can be imputed even to the most abandonedly Vitious, Corrupt and Profligate of Mankind ; so do they likewise attribute to them all the most odious and detestable Qualities, all the Malice, Cruelty, Ill-nature and Mischievousness of not only the most savage Monsters of Mankind, but even of the Worst of Devils. What a churlish, morose, testy, captious, cholerick Being do they make a Deity ? How out-ragiously furious, fierce and terrible in his Wrath ? How exceeding prone to anger ? And how nice and difficult to please ? An ill-natur'd, peevish, snarling, touchy, wrathful Hobgoblin, soon provoked to anger, most direfully Revengful, and even habitually Malicious, Ill-natur'd and Mischievous, even when unprovoked. So habitually Malevolent towards Mankind, as to be pleased and delighted with the Torments, Penances and Afflictions of poor Mortals, even of the most Harmless and Unoffending ; envying and denying to Mankind all, even the most innocent and innoxious Enjoyments of Life ; cramping their Liberty and Freedom with infinitely numerous, useless and unnecessary Prohibitions, Interdictions and Restraints, even from Acts no wise evil,  
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or hurtful to any ; and oppressing them with the cumbersome Load of numerous Injunctions and irksom Duties, no wise tending to the common Wellfare of Mankind, but meerly to the Misery and Discomfort of each particular Person ; delighting in their Sighs, their Tears, their Groans, their Griefs and Sufferings ; taking a malicious Pleasure in their Miseries, their Ruin and Destruction ; greedily ravening after human Blood, most savagely delighting in the Slaughter and Butchery of human Sacrifices, and eagerly glutting his savage Appetite with the most horribly sacred Feasts of throbbing Flesh and reaking Blood, not only (*Cannibal* like) of such hapless Wretches as had provoked his Wrath and merited his Vengeance ; but even of the most Innocent and Unoffending ; feasting and regaling himself with the most horrible Sacrifices and Banquets of the Flesh and Blood of spotless Virgins, and of innocent and unoffending Babes and Sucklings. A blood-thirsty savage Monster both direfully Revengful, and even petulantly Melevolent and Cruel ; wantoning in Mischief, and loving to do Mischief meerly for Mischiefs Sake ; delighting to pester, harm and damnify Mankind, even without any Prospect of Benefit, or Advantage to himself, but meerly for the Pleasure of the Mischief ; cruelly robing, plundering and stripping them of their Wealth and Substance, tho' of no Manner of Use, or Service to himself ; affrighting and terrifying

them both out of their Wits and Wealth ; impoverishing them with heavy and endless Impositions ; with perpetual Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings ; with endless Compositions, Commutations and Dispensations of Duties, Penances and Inhibitions ; with costly Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations ; forcing and constraining poor trembling Mortals to redeem themselves by heavy Ransoms from his blood-thirsty Cruelties, and destructively malicious Petulences ; obliging them to purchase the Safety of their Persons, with the Ruin of their Fortunes. A being so excessively Mischievous, Malevolent and Cruel, as to be a common Terror, Bane and Pest to all Mankind ; except his Priests, the Jackcals that seek out, hunt down, and bring him in his Prey.

LXXXII. SUCH a meer Devil do they make him towards the Layety ; a Being meerly Malevolent, Mischievous and Destructive to them : An Object by no Means of their Love, Desire and Delight, but meerly of Horror, Dread and Hatred : A Being to them meerly baneful and pernicious ; a meer Pest and Nuisance to all the Rest of Mankind, to the Sober, Just and Righteous, as well as the Profligate, Dissolute and Flagitious, to all indifferently alike, except the Priesthood only, to them only Inoffensive ; to them only Useful and Commodious, those sanctified Impostors, thro' the Terrors of their fierce devouring hobgoblin Deities, affrighting poor superstitious Dupes  
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and Bigots out of both their Substance and their Freedom; forcing them to purchase their Safety and Salvation from the Jaws of those fierce devouring, deified Demons, by giving up to their supposed Savers and Redeemers the crafty Priesthood, whatever could be dear and precious to Mankind; not only patiently surrendering themselves to be the humble Slaves and Vassals of the haughty, insolent, domineering Priesthood, blindly submitting to all the Burthens, Restraints and Impositions their sanctified Tyrants and Task-masters should think fit to load and cramp them with: But even making themselves the willing Instruments and fatal Tools of destroying, or enthraling others to the same Yoke of sacerdotal Tyranny; furiously persecuting, ruining and destroying whomever the crafty Priesthood do recommend to Ruin and Destruction, by the fatal Nicknames and Titles of Infidels, Miscreants, Enemies and Contemners of the Gods; the frantick, blind Priest-ridden Wretches, zealously sacrificing and destroying their fellow Mortals, thro' the pannick Dread of becoming themselves a Prey to those devouring deified Monsters.

LXXXIII. Such a meer Devil towards the Layety doth each Gang of holy Atheists represent their Idol Deity; the more mischievous, fierce and terrible he is supposed to be towards the Layety, the more effectually it serves their holy Ends and Purposes. But tho'



tho' so fierce and mischievous towards the Layety; yet towards the holy Priesthood, what a gentle, tame, good-natur'd Hobgoblin do they make it? How 'twill cringe and fawn, and lick the Fingers of its holy Feeders? How tractable, obsequious and well-disciplin'd a Demon it is? 'Twill do, or say, just what its holy Keepers would have it do. The good natur'd Thing never turns truand, hangs an arse, or sullenly refuses to comply in any Case, but straightway does just as they bid it. How good and gracious 'tis ever to them, and how harmless and civil to their Gift-offering Votaries and Supplicants; and again how fiercely will it fly upon, tear, and devour whomever his holy Keepers hound him at? But of his own accord he never hurts, or flies at any, but only poor empty handed Beggars; or such naughty close-fisted Curmudgeons who grutch to spend their Substance in good Works, in pious Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings, to feast his hungry Godship, and enrich his holy Priesthood: And to fly upon, worry and destroy such ungiving Wretches; where's the Harm of that? But to the holy Priesthood and their freely-giving Votaries, 'tis mainly good and gracious.

LXXXIV. So detestably malicious, ill-natur'd, cruel and bloodthirsty do they make their spurious Deities, without one Grain of real Goodness in the whole Composition; even

even what the knavish Priesthood nickname their Graciousness and Goodness, consisting of nothing in the World but their supposed partial Favour towards their own Jackals, Factors and Purveyors, their bribing Favourites, the Priests; and of their corrupt Connivance, Indulgence and Encouragements to Villany and Wickedness: Characters all plainly vitious, odious and detestable

LXXXV. NOR were the Infirmities and Follies which the heathen Priesthood imputed to their supposed Deities less contemptible and ridiculous, then their Vices were pernicious and detestable. What an ugly, awkward, loobily, contemptible, ridiculous Figure do the Priesthood generally make of one of their deified Scare-crows, if seriously and attentively considered? What puts the hood-wink'd, trembling Bigot into such pannick Agonies and Fears; when closer viewed appears an Object of Contempt and Scorn, rather then of dread and terror? How boobily, silly, needy, awkward and helpless do they represent him? On one hand, how foolishly fond of empty Shew and Vanity? How childishly delighted with gawdy Pomp and Pageantry? How vain-gloriously proud and pleased with gilded Praises and glittering Honour? And how conceited of his ostentatious Glory? And on tother hand; what a hungry, craving, needy, helpless, humble, cringing, despicable Monster do they make of it, that  
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can neither catch its Prey, nor feed it self; but is forced to depend upon his Priests, his meerly necessary Priests for their daily Attendance, Help and Assistance on all Occasions? And necessitated to be beholding, not only to his beloved Priesthood, his Cleros, or select Favourites, but even to the scorned, hated and rejected Layety, for his daily Food; for tho' the Priest is Steward, Butler, Butcher, Cook and Carver to his God; yet 'tis the Largeesses and Bounties of the Layety that furnish out the Feast; 'tis at their Expence, alone the holy Priesthood regale and fatten, both their hungry Deity and themselves. So impotent a Monster do they make him; so weak and helpless, as not to be any wise able of himself to maintain his own Interests with Mankind, to vindicate his own Cause, or to defend himself against the contemptuous Uncompliances, Oppositions and Insults of stupid Infidels and silly Mis-believers; but is forced to depend upon the friendly Help and Aid of human Champions to assert his Cause and Interests, and be beholding for his own Defence to the furious Zeal and savage Cruelties of revengeful persecuting Priests, with numerous Levies and frantick Bands of hair-brain'd Zealots, and blind headlong Bigots; for 'tis ever for the Sake of their poor helpless God; 'tis in the necessary Defence of him, his Cause and Interests, that wrathful Priests do persecute, destroy and ruin those they hate



hate. A meer deified Bugbear, formidable only to his humble, non-resisting, prostrate Votaries; towards them, right Bully-like; most furiously Valiant, Fierce and Terrible; but yet not able to defend himself, or make good his Party against the Opposition of weak human Foes and Adversaries, without the necessary Aids of furious Priests and hair-brain'd Bigots. And again.

LXXXVI. WHAT a meer Oaf and Bubble do they represent him in the Conduct of his own Affairs? A meer silly, boobily, half-witted Monster, that has lost all Power and Authority, even over his own Servants and Domesticks; that has been bubbled out of it by his Priests, meerly trick'd and chous'd by his own knavish Agents; who hath bartered away both his Authority and Freedom for a Junquet, and sold himself a Bondslave for a Sop. Who has granted to his Priests full Power and absolute Authority; without Condition, Limitation, or Reserve, in all Things that concern, or him, or his; promising in all Events to stand to whatever Bargains they should make in his Name; to ratify whatever they ordain, and blindly execute whatever they decree. The Oaf has granted a chart Blank, and given them a Power to put upon himself what Terms they please themselves; he can't get off, the Knaves have taken him at his Word and hold his Nose fast to the Grindstone; they've got the

Game now to themselves, and smartly turn'd the Tables on him ; 'tis their Turn now to give Command ; 'tis his Part now to truckle and obey ; they've taken to themselves the effective Power and Authority, and only left to him the empty Name and Shadow of Superiority and Dominion : They both absolutely devise, and effectively denounce the Judgments, Sentences and Decrees ; allowing him no other Part, but barely to be their very Eccho, and repeat invariably what they before had peremptorily resolved and determin'd ; not allowing him, even so much as *Hobson's* Choice, to take it as he finds it, or to let it quite alone ; no, he must ratify and execute in all Events, be what it will ; he must not mutter, flinch, nor hang an arse, but straightway do what he is bid. They've got poor Monster in their Power, he now must watch their Looks, observe their Winks and Nods, and know and do their Will at half a Word ; must forthwith grumble, snarl and shew his Teeth, when they would have him angry ; and again must cringe and fawn, and paw, and seem well pleased, when they would have him be Propitious and Good-humour'd ; must straitway worry, bite, and fly upon whomever they hallow him at ; and in a twinkling quit his Hold, and shake his Ears, whene'er they call him off. Such plainly is the Case between the poor Priest-ridden hamper'd Monster, and his domineering sacerdotal Keepers. LXXXVII.

LXXXVII. AND indeed (to weigh the Matter duly) what could the poor Hobgoblin do? They have poor Monster in their Power, and *nolens volens*, he must stoop to what Terms they please to put upon him; the Priesthood are so necessary to him, that he can in no wise do without them; they're all in all to him; they are his daily Attendants, they're his Brokers, they're his Factors, they're his Agents, Envoys and Embassadors; they're his Stewards, they're his Friends, his Champions and Defenders; they're every Thing to him; 'tis plain he must keep well with them on any Terms. The poor, needy, hungry, awkward Demon cannot shift for himself, but must depend upon the gracious Goodness of his Priest; the poor shiftless Hobgoblin cannot so much as feed himself without the Aid and Service of the necessary Priest; if therefore he would be fed, he must observe Command, and do whatever Tricks and Pranks his holy Keeper bids him do. Poor *Hob*'s a hungry, what would you have him do? Sir Priest is both his Steward, Butler, Butcher, Cook and Carver; how can poor *Hob* stand out on any Terms? Poor Monster must submit, or starve; poor *Hob* must dance whene'er Sir Priest does pipe, or may go Whistle for his Dinner; *Hob* must not hang on arse at any dirty Work Sir Priest would have him do; it must be done, or first, or last, or *Hob* may suck his own Paws



for any Viſuals he can get. If *Hob* turns Truant, and wont do the Job, Sir Priest will ſoon be up with him eſecks; no more good Jobs, no more good Junquets; no more good Bits, or Sups for *Hob*; no Cakes, no Collops; no ſavoury Meſſes, no Sacrifices; no Moles, no Libamina; no ſacerdotal Banquets, Feaſts, or Junquets: Poor *Hob* muſt buckle to, or ſtarve. So contemptibly, needy, helpſeſ, ſilly and half-witted did the heathen Priethood represent their ſpurious Deities.

LXXXVIII. How wretchedly contemptible; how ridiculous and abſurd on one hand; and how directly oppoſite to the truly glorious Attributes of the auguſt Creator, to his Omnipotence, Omnſcience, and perfect Self-ſufficiency? And on tother hand, how manifeſtly neceſſary to the ſelfiſh, partial, and pernicious Ends and Purpoſes of Priethcraft, or Heatheniſm, is that needy, craving, impotent, dependent Character of their idol Deities? And indeed if we attentively conſider the whole Character of thoſe fictitious Deities, how abominably vicious, how deteſtably odious, and how wretchedly contemptible do they appear; and how directly the reverſe in all their Attributes of the amiable glorious Character and Attributes of the only real God, the auguſt Creator of the Universe? And yet ſo commodious, uſeful and neceſſary to the ſelf-ended Purpoſes and Pretentions of Hierarchy and  
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Priestcraft are those vicious, detestable and contemptible Characters of their fictitious Deities; that holy Atheists plainly choose to renounce their infinitely glorious, good and gracious Creator, and in his stead set up for Gods such monstrously vicious, odious and contemptible imaginary Hobgoblins, rather than desist from those their selfish, partial and pernicious Purposes and Pretensions.

LXXXIX. How inconsistent with the true and genuine Notion and Attributes of the Deity, are all Suppositions of Neediness, Impotence and Dependance on Mankind? Yet how common and familiar is that gross Absurdity of Poluting, Corrupting and Confounding the truly glorious Character of the very Deity, with the impure Mixture of Attributes and Notions drawn and transferred from the vicious and contemptible Characters of the heathen Idols? But how gross is the Absurdity, and how easy to be detected? Can Omnipotence and perfect Self-sufficiency need any Help, Attendance, Service, or Assistance of Mankind; or need any the corporeal Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings, any the Banquets, Treats and Presents, any the Largesses and Bounties of poor Mortals? Can he have any Necessity, Use, or Occasion for any peculiar Servants, Officers, or Attendants to help, attend, serve, or assist him? Can he need any officious, human Champions, Friends and Abettors to defend him, or his Interests, against any poor mortal

mortal Foes, or Adversaries? Or can perfect Self-sufficiency have any Self-Interests with Mankind to be any wise carryed on, maintained and defended? Again; could the all-wise, th' infallibly discerning and unbyassably upright Arbiter of the Universe be any wise induced to deligate his sacred Justice to the peremptory Decision of any frail Mortals, so as to anticipate and forestal his own most righteous Tribunal, to the random Decision of any frail Mortals capable of being deceived and involuntarily mistaken; capable of being insincere and willfully partial and perverse? Subject to Error, subject to Passion, subject to Self-Interest, to Bribery and Corruption? Or could Omniscience be any wise deceived, surpriz'd, or trick'd: Or could the Almighty Arbiter of the Universe by any Act of Man, by any Predetermination, Predestination, or Predecision of willfully partial, or mistaken Man be precluded and debarr'd from doing real Justice at his own perfectly righteous and unerring Tribunal? How plainly absurd, how self-evidently false the Supposition? Again; how directly contrary was the corrupt Traffique of venal mercenary Expiations, Atonements, Propitiations, Commutations, Dispensations, Connivances and Indulgencies, to the unbyassably, upright and invariably steddy Justice of the perfectly righteous Creator, who will infallibly measure out his Rewards and Punishments, his Favours and his Vengeance to every



ry one according to their Works, according to the Measure of their Innocence and Guilt, their Merit and their Blame, their due Observation and their Violations of his sacred Precepts. Again; that savage Cruelty of the heathen Deities; their habitual Ill-Nature, Malevolence and Delight in Mischief; their groundless Antipathy, Malice and Aversion against the Generality of Mankind; their partial self-ended Favour and Distinction towards their Cleros, their select Minions, and bribing Favourites; how directly contrary were they to the impartial, generous and perfectly disinterested Goodness, Benignity, Tenderness and long-suffering Compassion of the common Father of Mankind, towards all, even towards his most offending Children? Ever delighting more in Mercy and Repentance than in Punishment and Vengeance; never punishing for his own Sake, but meerly for the Sake of Mankind; even for the Sake of sacred Justice, and of keeping up the due Observation of those wholesome Precepts, that are so plainly conducive and necessary for the common Wellfare and Happiness of Mankind.

XC. So directly Contrary, on one hand, were the supposed Vices and Infirmities of those heathen Deities, to the manifestly glorious Attributes and Perfections of the august Creator; and on tother hand, so directly contrary and adverse were those truly glorious Attributes and Perfections of the august Creator,

Creator, to the self-ended, partial and pernicious Purposes and Pretentions of Hierarchy and Priestcraft. Which is an apparent Reason why Hierarchy and Priestcraft do ever incline to substitute for Objects of religious Worship, Beings, to whom they may more colourably than to the august Creator, impute humanlike Appetites, Vices and Infirmities; and whose Characters they may frame and model so as best may serve their own self-ended Purposes and Pretentions. Thereby, not only corrupting the general Notion of a Deity, but even the gloriously amiable Character of the august Creator, with the absurd Mixtures of foreign Notions, drawn from the abominable Characters of their spurious Gods, reducing by Degrees the Notion of the very God to the same Level with those spurious Deities: But also by rigorously enforcing the Worship, and the Obedience to the supposed Will and Ordinances of those false Gods, they craftily withdraw the Bent and Attention of Man's Minds from the necessary Worship and most comfortable Contemplation of their heavenly Father, the amiably glorious, good and gracious Creator, and the due Observation of his truly salutary Precepts; setting up their own fictitious Deities as the only proper Objects of religious Worship; and themselves as the only divine Legislators and proper Objects of religious Faith: Faith and Obedience in, and to the Word, not of God, but of the Priest; being

a Duty ever most rigorously exacted by Hierarchy and Priestcraft. Such was the Notion of a Deity, and such the religious Faith of Heathenism, or Priestcraft.

XCI. As to the Worship, the Divine Service, or Service, as they call'd it, of the heathen Gods; that seems to have consisted of nothing else but corporeal Sacrifices and Oblations given to the Priests by their cullied Votaries in exchange for those imaginary Boons, or Blessings, which the crafty Priesthood so frankly undertake to procure for them from the Gods; namely, for those imaginary Expiations, Atonements, Propitiations, Commutations, Dispensations, Connivances, Indulgences and such like cœlestial Wares and sacerdotal Merchandizes, wherewith the Priesthood use to gull the People of their Substance; that Worship consisted meerly of corporeal Sacrifices and Oblations; Acts no wise necessary, or useful, no wise serviceable, profitable, or beneficial, either to the Gods, or to their gift-offering Votaries; but to the crafty Priest alone, who was indeed served, benefitted, and abundantly enriched thereby. For, of what Use, Service, or Benefit, could corporeal Sacrifices and Oblations possibly be, either to the Idols, meer brute, senseless inanimate Beings; or to the Ghosts of deceased Mortals, Beings meerly Spiritual? Could they (either the one, or the other) be refreshed, comforted and strength'ned by



these facerdotal Banquets, Feasts and Junquets; or could they make any Use, or Application, beneficial to themselves of any the corporeal Gifts, or Presents, of Mankind? And with respect to the real Deity; how much more absurd is it to imagine that any such corporeal Objects, or any Acts of the Creature could be necessary, or useful, could be any wise beneficial, serviceable, or profitable, to the Creator, a Being meerly Spiritual, Omnipotent, and Self-sufficient? Who may be obeyed, but cannot be served; who can neither need the Service, Aid, or Help, of any other Being, nor be any-wise availed, or profited thereby; to whom Man not only the supposedly rejected Layick, no, not even the haughty, scornful, proud, presumptuous Priest can be of any service, help, or profit, but when he hath done all the imaginary Service that he can for his Creator, he is still but an unprofitable Servant, a meer unnecessary, useless and unprofitable Servant. With what Advantage then can the conceited, proud, presumptuous Priest distinguish himself from the most despised Layick; since nor he, nor any Man, nor any other Being, can be necessary, or really useful and profitable to the august Creator, the only true, and very God?

XCII. ON the other hand; of what avail to the gift-offering Votary can be his corporeal Sacrifices and Oblations delivered and trusted to the Management of those holy Bribers of the

the Gods, the crafty Priests? Since the Decisions of divine Justice, and the future Dooms of Man are no wise in the Controul, or Power, of stupid Idols, or presumptuous Priests; nor yet of the departed Ghosts of Men decayed, subject themselves to the inevitable Awards of the same just Tribunal: But wholly in the Power and Disposition of the very God, the allwise, infallibly discerning, and unbyassably and invariably righteous God, who will accept no Bribes, nor admit any Evasions of his unerring Justice, nor will depute his sacred Judgments to the random Determination of any fallible, corrupt, or partial Mortals; nor will any wise connive at, or licence any the Violations of his most sacred and altogether undispersable Precepts; but will surely deal to every one according to their due Observance, or Violations thereof.

XCIII. AND indeed to rightly consider the Nature, Ends and Purposes of Things rather than the Sound of Names; what are those sacerdotal Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations, but imaginary Evasions of divine Justice, thro' the all-prevailing Efficacy of sacerdotal Intercessions; what are those sacerdotal Dispensations and Indulgences, but Licences and Permissions granted by most arrogantly presumptuous Priests to violate the Laws of their Creator, with audacious Assurances of Impunity; sacerdotal Licences, and Permissions to their gift-offering Votaries, free-

ly to indulge themselves in the Violations of the necessary and plainly salutary Restraints, and the supine Neglect and Forbearance of the no less necessary and salutary Duties universally and indispensably prescribed to all Mankind, by the most sacred Precepts of their ever just, and dread Creator. What are those sacerdotal Indulgences, Dispensations and Commutations, but the commuting, or exchanging the Obedience of Mankind due to the catholick Precepts of their Creator, for Obedience no wise due to the Decrees and Ordinances of the presumptuous, arrogant and plainly Impious Priesthood; who dare audaciously pretend to excuse, absolve and discharge their fellow Mortals from the due Performance of those real and necessary Duties, enjoined by and from the due Observation of those wholesome and necessary Restraints and Abstinence from the real Evils prescribed by God himself; provided they'll perform what are no real Duties, and abstain from what are no real Evils, in Obedience to the corrupt, partial and plainly self-ended Decrees and Ordinances of the proud, tyrannick Priesthood. Manifestly setting themselves up for divine Legislators, and even the supreme Legislators of the Universe; most arrogantly and impiously taking upon themselves to dispence, suspend and abrogate the most sacred Precepts, Rules, and Ordinances prescribed to Mankind by the august Creator; and in their stead set up  
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their own unrighteous, self-ended Edicts, Ordinances and Decrees, for Laws and Rules of divine Authority, and catholick, or universal Obligation, rigorously exacting strict Obedience thereto; whilst they contrarily absolve the People from their dutious Obedience, both to their legal Sovereigns, and even to their Creator himself; enervating, eluding and frustrating the benign Influences and Effects, both of civil Government and of true Religion towards the common Welfare of Mankind. So evidently absurd in their own Nature, and so pernicious in their Consequences are those Acts, which holy Atheists falsely call religious Worship and divine Service, or the Benefits and Services done to the immortal Beings by Mankind.

XCIV. As to the Morality of the Heathen; it must be acknowledged, that their Philosophers did labour diligently by their Lectures and Writings to instruct Mankind in the Knowledge of moral Virtues, and to deterr them from those Excesses, Crimes and Villanies, which were so manifestly hurtful to Society, and the common Welfare of Mankind, the common End and Purpose, both of civil Government and true Religion. But the Priesthood had no such friendly Regards to moral Virtue, as being nowise useful, or serviceable, to their corrupt and knavish Purposes; but, on the contrary, did industriously promote Villany and Vice as plainly more conducive to their pernicious selfish Ends; manifestly encourag-  
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ing and hardening Mankind in their Iniquities by the delusive Hopes of Impunity and certain Assurances of escaping the due Vengeance of divine Justice, by the corrupt Influence and Efficacy of sacerdotal Intercessions with their mercenary Deities. The knavish Priesthood not only granting to all Manner of Vice and Villany the Shelter and Protection of their sacred Asylums, or privileg'd Sanctuaries, against the Pursuits of human Justice; but also most audaciously undertaking to indemnify and secure them against the due Vengeance of divine Justice, by Means of their mercenary Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations,

XCV. THESE supposed Opportunities of corrupting divine Justice, and bribing the Gods themselves thro' the favourable Intercessions of the mercenary Priest; this blessed Opportunity of purchasing a plenary Indulgence and Impunity for the Practice of the blackest Crimes and most atrocious Villanies, by bribing the holy Priesthood, and taking in even the Gods themselves to be Part'ners and Sharers both of the Guilt and Booty, was, no doubt, a Notion extreamly palatable to vicious Appetites and flagitious Minds, and a most comfortable Antidote against all Remorse and Checks of Conscience and Dread of future Vengeance; to the vast Encouragement and Promotion of all Villany and Vice, and to the proportionate Advancement of sacerdotal Profit, Opulence and Power :

Power : For the more frequent and atrocious the Crimes and Villanies ; the more frequent would be the Occasion both for the Shelter and Protection of their sacred Immunities ; and also for their venal Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations ; and consequently of more frequent and more ample Sacrifices, Gifts and Offerings ; strength'ning and advancing still more and more the sacerdotal Faction and blessed Cause of Hierarchy, both by increasing infinitely the Number of their Dependants and Adherents, and by augmenting vastly their Opulence and Treasures. To the manifest Weakening and Endangering the civil Powers.

XCVI. VILLANY and Vice being so vastly profitable and commodious for advancing the self-ended Purposes of Hierarchy and Priestcraft ; and Virtue so directly disserviceable thereto ; the Reason is plain why Priests have ever so industriously labour'd to confound the Names and Notions of Vice and Virtue : Seeking by the Change of Names to change the Notions, and to transmute Evil into Good, and Good into Evil ; seeking to transform, (or according to the more modern Phrase, to transubstantiate) Vice into Virtue, and Virtue into Vice. Discountenancing, discouraging and suppressing all real Virtues ; not only Justice, or Fair-dealing, and that brotherly Love and tender Regard for each others Welfare, which is recommended and enjoyed by  
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the common Father of Mankind under the Name of Charity ; but even Prudence, or practical Wisdom itself, the common Mother and Directress of all real Virtues ; setting up for Virtues in their stead the direct Antitheses, or Contradictions to real Virtue, under the sham Names and Titles of religious Faith, holy Zeal, religious Piety, and holy Devotion. For instance :

XCVII. WHAT can be more diametrically opposite and contradictory to true Wisdom, then that stupid, blind, headlong Credulity which Priests so earnestly recommend as the highest Virtue, and enforce as the most necessary Duty, with the most furious Zeal and savage Cruelties, under the Title of religious Faith ? Credulity, the very grossest Badge of Folly ; the most commodious Anvil for Knavery to work upon ; Credulity the common Nurse of all sacerdotal Fictions and Impostures. What Knavery so pernicious, what Fiction, or Imposture, so grossly absurd, or self-evidently false, but what may currently pass upon, and be supported and maintained by the unreasonably Superstitious and blindly Credulous Dupe ; especially, if it comes recommended by the Priest, under the specious Title and Pretence of Religion, and the Interest, and Service of the Gods ? What Crime so black, what Impiety so flagrant, what Folly so gross but what may be pass'd from true Religion and Duty upon the groundless Dupes, who obstinately

obstinately chuses to trust blindly to the bare Word of the designing Priest, than to his own Senses and his Reason? For what End, or Purpose, did the wise and gracious Creator bestow those Lights upon Mankind, but to guard themselves against Imposture, Falshood and Deceit, and guide 'em to discern the Truth of Facts, and the Distinctions of Good and Evil? And what Occasion of more Importance can require the Use of those so blessed and so necessary Talents, then to examine and discern, 'twixt what is really Religion and Duty, and what is but Imposture and Pretence? When once th' Impostor has wrought his Cully up to such a Pitch as to abandon to him his Senses and his Reason; what guard hath then the Cully left in reserve to fence against any the plainest Imposition and Deceit? And what in the Name of Wonder is the doughty Object? What is the so sure, infallible and unsuspected Object of this stupendous Faith and Credit? Of this blind Confidence, this supine, unguarded, boundless Credulity? What is this so infallible Oracle of Sincerity and Truth, but the bare naked Word of the Fallacious, Insincere, Self-ended Priest, without the least Tittle of convictive Proof? 'Tis surely true; but why? What! Because the Priest says 'tis so? The *ipse dixit* of the Priest, forsooth, is that infallible Ground of Truth; in confidence of which, the abandon'd Bigot will glibly swal-

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low blindfold any, even the grossest Absurdities, or most palpable Falshoods.

XCVIII. How monstrously absurd is that common Choice, rather to believe the supreme Direction and Government of the Universe to be vested in a numerous Multiplicity of Beings, all co-ordinate to, and independent of each other? All Beings confessedly Needy, Indigent and Helpless of themselves; Beings depending on, and beholding even to Mankind for their necessary Bounties, Services and Attendance; to believe such wretched Stuff on the bare *ipse dixit* of the self-interested Priest, rather than to rest firmly in the sure and certain Knowledge of the one only supreme, omnipotent, omniscient, self-sufficient Being; a Certainty evinced, not only by the undoubted Testimony of divine Revelation, but also by the plainest, clearest and surest Conclusions of Reason, upon the fullest Testimonies of our own Senses: The free, unprejudiced Use of Reason upon the Observations of our Senses, naturally leading Mankind to the certain Knowledge of their Creator, unless diverted, checked and restrained by the crafty Delusions, impious Interdictions and most hellish Persecutions of Hierarchy and Priestcraft. Again;

XCIX. How much more eligible and comfortable to the Reflections of Mankind (was the free Use permitted to them of those blessed Talents, wherewith their all-wise and gracious Creator hath endowed them) would be the  
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plainly reasonable and well-grounded Faith, Hope and Confidence in the Benignity, Justice and Veracity of an Almighty, Omniscient, Self-sufficient and perfectly Disinterested Being, who neither can be deceived, nor can by any Means be tempted to deceive ; than a blind Credulity, or implicit Faith and Trust in the bare Word of a both fallible, and also (at least possibly) fallacious, insincere, self-ended Priesthood ; who may be deceived themselves ; and who may find it for their Purpose to deceive others ? But as the free Use of those blessed Talents, those certainly divine Gifts of Sense and Reason, do naturally lead Mankind to the Search, Knowledge and Contemplation of their divine Author ; that is the plain Reason why the free Use thereof is so furiously suppressed and interdicted by Hierarchy and Priestcraft : For, as on one hand, blind Credulity, or implicit Faith, on the bare Word and unexamined Dictates of the crafty self-ended Priesthood, is the most sublime Virtue, the most necessary Duty, and most fundamental Principle of Heathenism, Hierarchy and Priestcraft : So on tother hand, the teaching and divulging the salutary Knowledge, and dutious Faith, Worship and Obedience, relative to the one only supreme Director and Controuler of the Universe, is assuredly the very highest Treason, and most unpardonably mortal Crime, that can be committed against both Gods and Priests ; as plainly undeifying

those fictitious Gods, and also unpriestling and dethroning their pretended Officers and Hierarchs, their holy Vicegerents, their sanctify'd Lord Lieutenants, Governours and Rulers of the Earth.

C. 'T W A S plainly the free, unprejudiced Use of his own Reason, without blindly trusting to the self-ended Dictates of the manifestly insincere and partial Priesthood, that led the Wise *Socrates* to the clear and certain Knowledge of his Creator, the one only sovereign Arbiter of the Universe. And 'twas his undaunted Probity in divulging that so salutary Knowledge to the rest of Mankind, that rendered him the Mark and But of sacerdotal Fury, Malice and Revenge. His declaring the Creator to be the only true God, was plainly that so horrible Blasphemy and Treason against the Gods and Priests, that made his Life a Forfeit to sacerdotal Malice and blood-thirsty Zeal. His Wisdom and undaunted Probity of Speech were those horrid Crimes, for which the wrathful Priesthood could not be satisfied, or appeased, 'till they had his Blood. So fell the Wisest and most truly Virtuous and Religious Person of his Time, a Sacrifice and Victim to the furious and blood-thirsty Zeal of savagely cruel and tyrannick Priesthood.

CI. A G A I N; As the common Father of Mankind hath repeatedly declared his patient, long-suffering Compassion towards his Children, and most tender Regard for their common

mon Welfare ; so likewise hath he, as necessary thereto, both recommended and enjoyn'd to them amongst themselves a sincere, friendly and brother-like Love, and tender, compassionate, meek, patient, long-suffering and almost infinitely forbearing and forgiving Temper, and mutual Regard to each other's Welfare. Such is religious Charity, or brotherly Love, in its genuine Sense and full Extent. To which so laudable and necessary Virtue, what can be more directly opposite and contradictory, than that fierce, rigid, unforbearing, unforgiving, furious, implacable, blood-thirsty Malice and Revenge, which wrathful Priests so strenuously recommend to their Disciples, by the Names of holy Zeal, Jealousy and Concern for the Interests and Welfare of Religion and the Gods ; (as tho' the Gods could need the Help and Patronage of Men for their Protection and Defence ? ) A furious, implacable, blood-thirsty Malice against whomever the wrathful and revengeful Priest doth (right charitably) mark out for Destruction, by the Names of Enemies and Contemners of his poor defenceless helpless Gods, and of their Interests and Worship, against whomever the malicious Priest thinks fit to brand and stigmatize with his most fatal String of sacerdotal Nicknames, against whoever will not profess to think so, as the crafty Priest pretends to think ; against whoever will not do and say just so as the Priest would have him do and say ; against  
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whoever will not give up and devote his Sense, his Reason, his Person and his Substance, to the Will and Pleasure of the self-ended domineering Priest. So plainly contradictory to religious Charity, or Love in the genuine Meaning and Extent of the Word, is what Priests set up for Virtue under the Title of holy and religious Zeal: Which is the very Reason why Priests so solicitously suppress the genuine Meaning of the Word Charity, confining and restraining it to Alms-giving only, to Alms-giving, a very slender Branch of that so extensive Virtue.

CII. As to what the Priest calls religious Piety, what is it that the crafty Priest recommends to his cullied Votaries under the specious Nick-name of religious Piety, or dutious Love and Affection towards the Gods, but a patient, willing, ready Facility of being bubbled of their Wealth and Substance by the Priest? a ready Promptness to give up to the knavish Priest, whatever he demands for the pretended Use and Service of his needy Gods: This is that efficacious Piety, forsooth, by Means of which, divine Justice may be effectually avaded, and the Guilt of Sin annihilated and quite done away; may be expiated, or done away by Piety, by Acts of Piety, by pious Largeesses, Munificence and Alms to the poor needy Gods: this Gift offering Piety, or Alms-giving to the Gods, being of the very Essence of sacerdotal Expiations; insomuch, that from this munificent  
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Piety they take their very Name of Expiation. Thus do the crafty, self-interested, exacting Priesthood under the sham Pretences of religious Faith and Piety, require and exact of Mankind to give up first their Sense and Reason, then their Wealth and Substance to them their proud, imperious, tyrannick Lords and Masters; forcing them to traffique and exchange their Wealth and real Substance for meer Shams and empty Shadows, for meer notional Expiations, Atonements and Propitiations. Sir Priest, forsooth, first blinds his dupish Votary with his sacerdotal Muffler of implicit Faith, then picks the Cully's Pockets of his Pence; makes the poor Bubble play at blind-Mans-buff with Truth and Duty; and makes him play at Fools-game (even at Heads I win, and Tails you loose) with his Wealth and Substance. And;

CIII. As to what crafty Priests recommend to their Disciples under the Title of holy Devotion, of devoting and giving themselves up wholly to the Interests and Service of the Gods; what is it but plainly giving up and devoting themselves wholly, both Mind and Body to the Interest and Service, to the absolute Will and Pleasure of the crafty self-ended Priesthood? What is it, but the recommending and enjoyning to their Disciples to withdraw themselves from their liege Obedience, Adherence and Attachments to the Laws, the Interest and Service of their Prince and Country;

try ; and in lieu thereof, to devote, abandon and give up themselves wholly, both Mind and Body to the Interests and Service of the sacerdotal Faction ; blindly attaching themselves to the Interests and Service of Hierarchy and Priestcraft in all Events, even against the common Interests of their Prince, their Country and themselves ? Such are the Virtues set up by Priests instead of true Wisdom and moral Virtue.

CIV. Now asthro' the efficacious Prevalency of sacerdotal Intercessions with the Gods, the pious, gift-offering Votaries of the crafty Priests might freely indulge themselves in all Villany and Vice, and yet effectually evade the Vengeance of divine Justice ; and thro' the sacred Protection of those sacerdotal Asylums, or privileg'd Sanctuaries, they could no less effectually escape the baffled Pursuits of human Justice ; solikewise (that no Discouragements might remain to the so profitable Practice of Villany and Vice) by Means of those new-coyn'd sacerdotal Virtues, their pious Votaries may freely indulge themselves in the full Practice of all Villany and Vice without any fear of popular Disreputation, or Disesteem, for in Spite of all Villanies and Vice the pious, liberal, gift-offering Votary still may bear the Reputation of a virtuous and religious Person, a Person of good Principles and right orthodox Faith ; a faithful, pious, devout and zealously religious Person. Let him but frankly give up  
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his Sense, his Reason, his Person, and his Substance ; let him frankly devote them all, without reserve, to the Interests and Service of the sacerdotal Faction ; to the Interests and Service of Hierarchy and Priestcraft, and he may freely indulge his vicious Appetites in the unbridled Practice of all Crimes and Villanies without any remorse, or dread, either of Justice, or of popular Disreputation, the Priest will make him safe in all Events ; will frankly ensure his Safety against the due Vengeance both of divine and human Justice, and his Reputation against all popular Discredit and Disesteem ; he still shall be a thoroughly purified, thoroughly expiated, cleansed, guiltless, virtuous and religious Person. Thus do holy Atheists industriously confound the Names and Notions of Right and Wrong, of Vice and Virtue, Good and Evil ; impiously arrogating to themselves a presumptuous Right of dispensing, suspending, abrogating, altering, or changing at Will and Pleasure, all Laws and Ordinances, both human and divine, assuming plainly the most blasphemous Prerogative of being divine Legislators, the very supreme Legislators and absolute Controulers of all Laws and Constitutions both human and divine. To such a Pitch of Arrogance and Blasphemy dare the ambitious Pride of holy Atheists soar.

CV. By such various Devices did the crafty Priesthood raise themselves from being meer Officers and Creatures of the State, to

such a Pitch of Opulence and Grandeur, as to Priest-ride and Tyrannize over, not only the inferior Rank of Mankind, but even over their own Liege-Sovereigns, the national Princes, Kings, and Potentates of the Earth : Devices all calculated and contrived for no other Intent, or Purpose, but meerly to serve, and by which they do effectually serve, and bring about, even the utmost Ends and Purposes of sacerdotal Avarice, Ambition and Revenge.

CVI. So ; under Pretence of enforcing the Worship of the Gods, of their spurious suppositious Gods, the crafty Priesthood not only suppress all true Religion, all Worship and religious Regards to the true God ; persecuting, ruining and destroying as Infidels, Miscreants, Dissenters, Nonconformists, Enemies, Contemners and Blasphemers of the Gods, whoever dares profess to place his religious Faith and Trust in his Creator only : But also under the extensive Pretence of suppressing and extirpating Infidelity and Miscreancy, they persecute, ruin and destroy, as Infidels and Misbelievers, whoever dares gainsay, or call in Question any their self-ended Doctrines, or Pretensions, tho' never so manifestly false in Fact, absurd in Reason, or pernicious in their Effects and Consequences ; with inexorable Malice, Fury and Revenge, blasting the Characters, ruining the Fortunes, and destroying the Persons of whoever dares in any wise oppose, or thwart the sacerdotal Faction in any  
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their self-ended Measures, or Designs ; thro' the Violence and savage Cruelties of their inhuman Persecutions, awing, terrifying and subduing the People into an uniform Submission and absolute Obedience and Subjection to themselves (even to the haughty, proud, imperious Priesthood ) in every Thing without reserve, even against the civil Powers, even against the Interests of their Prince, their Country and themselves. So dangerous a Weapon is the persecuting Power in the Hands of an ambitious, crafty, self-designing Priesthood.

CVII. So likewise thro' the Pretence of being divinely constituted Mediators between their fellow Mortals and the Gods ; thro' the Pretence of expiating the Offences of their fellow Mortals, of atoning, or appeasing the Wrath and Vengeance, and of propitiating, or procuring for them the Favour of the Gods by Virtue of their favourable Intercessions ; the crafty Priesthood gain over and engross to themselves, as well the Affections and Devotion, as the Submission and Obedience of the People ; who not only love them, worship them, and adore them as their necessary Deliverers, Savers, and Redeemers from the destructive Wrath and Vengeance of their fierce, mischievous, devouring hobgoblin Deities ; but also dread, fear and reverence them as absolute Controulers of their Fates ; who can at Will and Pleasure, as well destroy as save. While on one hand, thro' their dreadful persecu-



ting Power and savage Cruelties, they awe and crush the Wise and Brave into an absolute Submission and Obedience to their Will ; on tother hand, they universally gain over and attach by the strongest Ties, both of Love and Fear, the Timorous and Superstitious to the Interests of the sacerdotal Faction ; becoming thereby so formidably Popular, as not to be easily curbed, or controuled, by the civil Powers ; but on the contrary, become able to controul and over-awe the civil Magistrate, and reduce even their legal Sovereigns, as well as their fellow Subjects, to absolute Submission and Obedience to the Will and Pleasure of the haughty domineering Priesthood.

CVIII. UNDER the pretended Ordinance of the Gods, that their peculiar Favourites, the holy Priesthood should be sacred and accountable to them alone ; the crafty Priesthood (now formidably Powerful and Popular) effectually exempt themselves from the Jurisdiction of the civil Magistrate, and the Justice of their Country's Laws ; haughtily arrogating to themselves a *jure divino* Privilege, a most monstrous Prerogative of practicing with Impunity, all Manner of Frauds, Violence and Outrage ; all Manner of Injury and Wrong, either against their private Neighbour, or the Publick ; to commit at Pleasure without any Lett, or Check of Laws whatever, Cheats, Repines, Thefts, Roberies, Rapes, Murders, Seditions, Riots, Tumults, Treasons and Rebellions,

bellions, whatever Crimes and Villanies, Lust, Avarice, Ambition, Petulence, or Revenge, can prompt them to ; all with Impunity ; all without any Centroul, or Check of Magistrate, or Laws. Their Persons, forsooth, are sacred and dedicated to the Gods, they are the Servants of the Gods and accountable to the Gods alone ; the civil Magistrate, the prophane, unsanctified Lay-Magistrate must not, even to save the Publick from inevitable Ruin and Destruction, must not on any Account whatsoever dare to lay his unhallowed Hands, his prophane unhallowed Hands upon the sacred Person of the Priest ; upon the sacred Person of a holy, sanctified Rebel, Traytor, Thief, or Murderer. Their Function, forsooth, is not of civil, but of divine Institution ; the Election and Appointment of their Persons is the very Act of the Gods themselves ; their Authority is altogether *jure divino* and entirely independant of the civil Powers : The civil Magistrate must not dare to lay his Hand upon them ; their legal Sovereign must not dare do Justice to his injur'd Subjects, or himself, upon the sacred Person of the audacious, insolent and contumaciously offending Priest ; he must not dare to violate the sacred Immunities of the holy Clan, on pain of incurring their holy Curses, Execrations, Banns and Censures, on pain of incurring the Fury, Wrath and Vengeance of the doughty fierce hobgoblin Deities, on pain of incurring the Indignation, Malice

Malice and Revenge of the incensed sacerdotal Faction ; on pain of popular Seditions, Tumults, Insurrections, Treasons and Rebelions. Such is the natural Tendency and Consequence of that crafty sacerdotal Pretence of the divine Institution and Election of their Function and their Persons ; of Institution and Appointment by any Power, or Authority independant of the State ; grant them that Foundation only, and they'll take the Rest themselves of course.

CIX. BY Means of their sacred Asylums, or privileg'd Sanctuaries, they cannot only effectually protect and patronize their own Emissaries, their Ruffians, Bravoës and Assassins, the pious Instruments of sacerdotal Avarice, Ambition and Revenge ; but can also screen from publick Justice, whomever they think fit for any Cause to patronize and protect ; setting themselves up on one hand for supreme Arbiters and Judges between their legal Sovereign and his liege People, whom he may, or whom he shall not chastize for any Offence, or Crime, against their fellow Subject, or their Prince : Whilst, on tother hand, no Favour nor Mercy of the civil Magistrate, no Privilege, or Protection can save, or screen the Wretch that sacerdotal Wrath and Malice shall doom a Sacrifice to their Revenge. Such is the Use, the Consequences and Effects of sacerdotal Asylums, or priveleg'd Sanctuaries, under the Direction and Controul of a haughty



ty, independant, domineering Priesthood, who thereby plainly make themselves sovereign Controulers of the publick Justice; to the apparent Diminution, Detriment and Weakening of the legal Power and Authority of the civil Magistrate.

CX. UNDER the Pretence of Piety and Devotion in supplying the Wants and relieving the Necessities of the Gods, the crafty Priesthood by a perpetual Tribute of Oblations, Gifts and Offerings, drain the Riches of the People into their own Coffers; terrifying, squeezing and extorting their Substance from them to the Ruin and Misery of their impoverished and neglected Families; not only thro' the pannick Fears and Dread of the imaginary Wrath and Vengeance of their hungry, fierce and terrible Gods; but also to avoid the popular Disreputation and Reproach of being impious, ungodly, irreligious Persons, neglectful and regardless of Piety, Religion and the Gods; and above all, thro' the reasonable Dread and Apprehension of incurring those so fatal Nicknames of Atheists, Infidels, Neglectors and Contemnors of the Gods, and as such incurring the real Wrath and Vengeance of the unresistably powerful, implacably cruel, and inexorably avenging Priesthood. The crafty Priesthood thereby engrossing, by Degrees, the Wealth and Treasures of whole Kingdoms and Nations into their own Hands; into dead Hands, Hands meerly dead and useless to the State; who by their pretendedly sacred Immunities

munities screen and exempt both their Persons and Possessions from bearing any Share, or Portion of the necessary Burthens of the respective Community, or contributing to the occasional Exegencies of the State ; but cast the Load of all publick Burthens upon the poor impoverished and exhausted Layety, by their pernicious misnamed Piety, or Bounties, to the Priests, becoming utterly disabled to do those Services which otherwise they might have been well capable of doing for the State. Whilst on one hand, the wretchedly poor exhausted Layety are miserably over-burthened with the necessary Charges of the State ; on tother hand, the lazy, uselefs, sacerdotall Drones, wallow in Wealth, wallow in Ease, wallow in shamelefs Luxury ; not only refusing to ease the poor over-burthen'd People by contributing toward the publick Burthens of the State, but also unmercifully heaping on further Loads and Burthens on the Shoulders of the miserable Layety, rigorously exacting from them their never ceasing sacerdotall Imposts, Dues and Tributes, perpetually teasing, squeezing and demanding from them endlefs Oblations, Gifts and Offerings for their hungry Gods.

CXI. THE Wealth of the Community being thus engrossed into Hands, not only dead and uselefs to the Publick, but also formidable, dangerous and destructive to the State ; into the Hands of intestine Enemies, rather than Subjects of the State ; into the Hands of an independant rival Power ; into Hands that expressly

expresly disown and renounce all Duty of Subjection and Obedience to the civil Magistrate and Dependence on the State, claiming Powers, Superiorities and Dominion utterly inconsistent with the Supremacy, or Sovereignty of the civil Magistrate; the Wealth and Substance of the People being engrossed into such Hands, and so put out of the Reach and Power of the civil Magistrate, the State is thereby so manifestly weakened and impoverished as not to be able to make any vigorous Efforts, either for the carrying on any great Designs for the publick Good, or for the necessary Defence and Safety of the Publick, against either the Invasions, or Attempts, of foreign Enemies, or the continual Usurpations and Encroachments of an intestine, formidable, rival Power nested within the very Bowels of the State; an intestine rival Power infinitely enriched and effectually enabled to foment continual Seditions, Tumults and popular Comotions, and maintain powerful Factions, Insurrections and Rebellions against their national Sovereign, with that very Wealth and Tribute which they daily extort and squeeze from his deluded Subjects. How wretched is the Case of such a Prince, whene'er the publick Safety, or any the necessary Exigencies of the State may call for powerful Supplies? He finds his own Coffers empty, his Revenues forestalled, intercepted, sunk and drained into the Coffers of an independent rival Power, and his miserably impoverish'd and exhausted Subjects,



jects, utterly disabled to answer the called for Supplies, thro' their mistaken Piety and fatal Bounties to the insatiably ravening, rapacious Priesthood, for the pretended Use and Service of their Gods: What other Resource has a poor distressed Prince, in such a Case, but to submit to, and become an humble Supplicant to his wealthy, proud, luxurious Clergy, his *quondam* Subjects, but now an independent rival Power, who now can make their Mercate of the publick Necessity, and put their own Terms upon their unhappy Sovereign; the crafty Priesthood first reducing him to the Necessity of applying to them, and then obliging him to purchase the necessary Supplies to answer the pressing Exigencies of the impoverished and endanger'd State, at the fatal Price of giving up his Peoples Liberties, and his own sovereign Prerogatives, by confirming and giving the Sanction of Law to all their enthusiastick *jure divino* Claims and Pretensions, to all their hierarchical Usurpations and Encroachments, both on the Rights and Liberties of his poor miserably oppressed Subjects, and also on his own just Prerogatives and legal Sovereignty. So fatal is the Impolicy and Folly for any Potentate to suffer any Power, independent of his own, to engross into their Hands the Wealth and Substance of his People. Again:

CXII. UNDER the Pretence of revealing to Mankind the Will and Ordinances of the Gods, they set themselves up for divine Legislators

lators and supreme Controulers and Over-Rulers of all human Laws ; frustrating, forestaling, oppugning, over-bearing and eluding the most wholesome Constitutions, and even the most necessary Regulations of the civil Legislature ; setting up their own self-ended Edicts, Ordinances and Decrees, the Dictates of their own self-ended Appetites and Passions, for Laws of divine Authority and universal Obligation ; under Pretence of enforcing due Obedience to the sacred Will and Ordinances of their Gods, rigorously exacting and compelling both Prince and People absolutely to submit to, obey and become subservient to the Will and Pleasure of the haughty domineering Priesthood ; over-awing the Prince on one hand, through their formidable Power and Authority with the deluded superstitious, blind, bigotted Multitude ; and on tother hand, obliging their poor priest-ridden Sovereign to be the Executioner of their Decrees, and be the fatal Instrument of ruining and destroying the Wisest and Bravest of his own Subjects ; of ruining and destroying whoever dares bravely and honestly adhere to the common Interests of their Prince and Country against the tyrannical Usurpations and Encroachments of the sacerdotal Faction ; reducing both Prince and People to absolute and uniform Subjection and Obedience to their self-ended Edicts and Decrees ; cramping the Liberties of Mankind with infinitely numerous and unnecessary Restraints and Interdictions ; encumb'ring them with infinitely

numerous, unnecessary, spurious Duties and Performances; driving them with Commands; checking them with Inhibitions; unmercifully heaping Load upon Load, and Burthen upon Burthen; goading and galling them on every Side with savage Cruelties; miserably harassing, impoverishing and oppressing both Prince and People; all equally enslaved to sacerdotal Pride, all uniformly crushed, oppressed and kept down by the all-over-bearing Weight of hierarchick Tyranny. So wretchedly miserable are the People; and so wretchedly unhappy (or at least precarious) is the Case of any Prince where Hierarchy and independent Priesthood bear the sovereign Sway.

CXIII. ON tother hand, how happy are they, both Prince and People, who free from the oppressive Tyranny and savage Cruelties of Hierarchy and Priestcraft, can truly enjoy the Blessings of fœderal Society, regulated according to the wholesome Rules and Precepts of genuine and uncorrupt Polity and Religion; whose common End, *viz.* the common Welfare of Mankind is certainly the same, and whose common Duties of Justice, Charity, or mutual Benevolence and Sobriety, the common Means of both directed towards that same common Purpose, are (when rightly understood) neither in any wise pernicious in their Effects and Consequences, nor in themselves burthen some, or uneasy to be born! Who can enjoy the combin'd, concentrated Protection both of divine and civil Justice? Who can enjoy



joy the infinite Comforts of mutual and sincere Benevolence and reciprocal good Offices ; and the lasting and untainted Satisfaction of virtuous and duly tempored Pleasures ; free both from all irksome and unnecessary Restraints and Interdictions of what is no wise Evil ; and also from the irksome and unnecessary Burthen of performing what are no real Duties. Who can freely enjoy the truly comfortable Contemplation of the supreme, all-just, all-good and gracious Being ; whose Will is gracious ; whose Ordinances are all perfectly easy, both to be comprehended and obeyed ; whose Yoke is easy and whose Burthen's light ; whose Precepts were not given to us for his Sake, but plainly for our own ; who commands us nothing but what is plainly good and beneficial to Mankind, and who restrains us from nothing but what is plainly evil, noxious and detrimental to our common Welfare ; and whose upright, steady, impartial Justice is no wise dreadful to the Good and Righteous, but comfortable to his Thought, and necessary to his present Happiness and Safety ; and whose future Happiness and Safety doth not precariously depend upon the Works, or Will of any other Mortal whatsoever, but meerly on his own alone, when every one will be respectively rewarded according to his Works. So easy are the Duties, and so comfortable the Blessings of genuine and uncorrupt Polity and Religion ; all which are inevitably corrupted and destroyed where-ever Hierarchy and Priestcraft become Predominant.

**CXIV. IDOLATRY**, or Heathenism, being such a Composition of Knavery and Villany, and so extremely Pernicious to Mankind; 'tis not to be wond'red that it was so odious and detestable, that it was such an Abomination in the Sight of the all-just, all-good and gracious Father of Mankind. Had the Evil of Idolatry consisted in meer Folly, in merely ridiculous but harmless Folly; had the Absurdities of Idolatry been merely the ill-compacted Product of gross Simplicity and Ignorance, offered simply to the free unfettered Reason and Contemplation of Mankind without any Violence, or Compulsion, leaving both the Will and Understandings of Mankind, free to examine, try and judge, and likewise to either espouse, or reject at Pleasure, without any undue Prejudice, or Influence of Threats, or actual Coercion; the Absurdities of Idolatry, gross as they are, had, under such Circumstances, been so far from being a proper Object of our serious Hatred and Indignation, that they had been really a proper Object of our serious Scorn, or mirthful Drollery; Idolatry, under such Circumstances, having no Taint of Guilt, or moral Evil, had been an Object in no wise Worthy of the Indignation of the All-wise, as well as Almighty Being; who could not be really jealous of the ridiculous Worship and mock Honours of those stupid, senseless, jack-pudding Deities; had the Solemnity of the superstitious Farce terminated in the meer Ignorance and Folly only of its Managers and Performers:

Performers: But when Idolatry, instead of being (as it seems to be generally conceived) the casual Random, fortuitous Product of gross Ignorance and Folly, was really the Product of gross Knavery and Design; when those Absurdities came recommended under the solemn Pretence of divine Authority and Revelation, by Persons of Craft, Subtlety and Design; when those Absurdities came ushered in as necessary Duties, with dreadful Terrors, Threats and Menaces of real Tortures, Ruin and Destruction; when those Absurdities were actually obtruded on the Wills and Understandings of Mankind with all the Fury, Violence and Outrage of inexorable, savage and remorseless Persecution; when those Absurdities were not only the Product, but were also the Engines of Craft and Villany to impoverish and enslave Mankind; Devices of sloathful and luxurious Villany to devour and swallow up the Labours of the Honest and Industrious; to rob and plunder with Impunity, to despoil and strip Mankind of their Properties and Possessions; to enslave their Bodies, subdue and captivate their Understandings, to enthrall both Mind and Body; and debase the Image of the august Creator to the Level of the most stupid thoughtless Abject of brute Beasts; reducing Mankind to the Level of Beasts, that have no Understanding, nor can discern 'twixt moral Good and Evil, or 'twixt speculative Truth and Falshood; when Idolatry is made the Engine of Knavery and Craft,



Craft, to corrupt, subvert and defeat all true Polity and Religion, and to support and carry on all Manner of Fraud, Violence and Outrage, to render the Bulk of Mankind wretched and miserable ; when Idolatry is plainly such a Composition of horrible Villany and Knavery, so full of glaring Guilt and real Evil, 'twas certainly an Object worthy of the highest Indignation and Resentment of the all-just, all-good and gracious Creator. Which is a plain Reason why Heathenism is spoken of with so much Detestation in the holy Scriptures, and the Predominancy thereof termed the Kingdom of *Sathan*, the Kingdom of Darkness, the Kingdom of Sin and Death, and placed in direct Opposition to genuine Religion ; which is therefore termed the Kingdom of Heaven, because there the just, impartial and disinterested Precepts of the all-wise Creator, are made the sovereign Law and Rule of Life ; and not the self-interested Dictates, Ordinances and Decrees of crafty and self-ended Men. So plainly reasonable in all Respects ; so entirely useful and beneficial to Mankind is true unmix'd Religion ; and so plainly absurd in Speculation, and so extensively Pernicious in Practice is Idolatry, or Priestcraft. So plainly conducive and necessary to the common Welfare of Mankind are true Polity and Religion ; and so plainly pernicious and destructive to both, are Hierarchy and Priestcraft.

7 JUN 66  
F I N I S.

### Errata in the Second ESSAY.

**I**N the Contents, Article the 9th, for Clero read *Cleros*.  
Ar. the 25th, for and r. *of*. Ar. the 31st, for weary r. *wary*.  
Ar. the 32d, & 33d, for and r. *was*, and for is the, r. *tho' the*.  
Ar. the 50th, for haman r. *human*. Ar. the 51st & 52d, for  
favourite Priests r. *favourites the Priests*. Ar. the 80th, for Pa-  
lythism r. *Polytheism*. Ar. 98th, for of Vices, r. *Vices*. Ar. 112,  
for of Mankind r. *of the Gods*.

### INTRODUCTION.

Page 24, line 14, for broke, r. *brooke*. p. 25, last l. for Oppo-  
site, r. *Apposite*. p. 26, l. 14, for these, r. *those*. l. 16, for ver-  
nished, r. *varnished*.

### In the ESSAY.

Page 2, line 20, for Prompted, r. *were powerfully Prompted*.  
p. 11, l. 12, for Arbirary, r. *Arbitrary*. p. 13, l. 20, & 23, for  
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l. 24, for repacious, r. *rapacious*. p. 24, l. 31, for dare, r. *and*  
*dare*. p. 28, l. 10, for their, r. *and their*. p. 32, l. 28, for seduc-  
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### ESSAY II.